

# TOUR OPERATORS STOPPED SELLING TURKISH VACATIONS TO RUSSIAN TOURISTS



As far as Russian tourists are concerned, Turkey is one of the most popular vacation destinations. Official figures indicate that as many as 3.3 million Russians holidayed in the country in 2014. However, the tour operators in Russia have suspended the sale of new tours and canceled flights the day after the Turkish military downed Russia's fighter-bomber, according to Russian media reports.

Russia's move, a blow to the tourism industry in Turkey, follows the Russian tourism regulator and foreign ministry's recommendations to avoid travelling to Turkey for safety reasons. Today's Zaman, a Turkish newspaper, reported that **Russia contributed as much as \$4 billion to the economy of the country in the previous year.**

Dmitry Gorin, deputy head of the Association of Tour Operators in Russia, said that the tour operators in Russia have not only stopped sale of tour packages to Turkey, but also are canceling chartered flights. **Regarding the Russian tourists that already are on vacation in the country, he said that there are no plans to evacuate them immediately.**

Russia retaliated to express its angst after one of Turkey's F-16 interceptors downed Russia's SU-24 fighter-bomber with the help of an air-to-air missile near the Turkey-Syria border. While Turkey argued that the fighter-bomber violated the country's airspace, Russia maintained that their aircraft was in Syria's airspace when it was downed.

Following the downing of the Russian fighter-bomber, both Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev and President Vladimir Putin said that Turkey has links with Islamic terrorist groups and have therefore suggested that the country is dangerous as far as Russian tourists are concerned.

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