



Travel Advisory: Russia – Do Not Travel

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Do not travel to Russia due to the unpredictable consequences of the unprovoked full-scale invasion of Ukraine by Russian military forces, the potential for harassment and the singling out of U.S. citizens for detention by Russian government security officials, the arbitrary enforcement of local law, limited flights into and out of Russia, the Embassy's limited ability to assist U.S. citizens in Russia, and the possibility of terrorism. U.S. citizens residing or travelling in Russia should depart immediately. Exercise increased caution due to the risk of wrongful detentions.

The U.S. government's ability to provide routine or emergency services to U.S. citizens in Russia is severely limited, particularly in areas far from the U.S. Embassy in Moscow, due to Russian government limitations on travel for embassy personnel and staffing, and the ongoing suspension of operations, including consular services, at U.S. consulates.

In September, the Russian government mobilized citizens to the armed forces in support of its invasion of Ukraine. Russia may refuse to acknowledge dual nationals' U.S. citizenship, deny their access to U.S. consular assistance, subject them to mobilization, prevent their departure from Russia, and/or conscript them.

U.S. citizens should note that U.S. credit and debit cards no longer work in Russia, and options to electronically transfer funds from the United States are extremely limited due to sanctions imposed on Russian banks. There are reports of cash shortages within Russia.

Commercial flight options are extremely limited and are often unavailable on short notice. If you wish to depart Russia, you should make independent arrangements as soon as possible. The U.S. Embassy has severe limitations on its ability to assist U.S. citizens to depart the country and transportation options may suddenly become even more limited. Click [here](#) for Information for U.S. Citizens Seeking to Depart Russia.

U.S. Embassy personnel are generally not permitted to travel on Russian air carriers due to safety concerns. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) downgraded the air safety rating for Russia from Category 1 to Category 2 on April 21, 2022, due to Russia's Federal Agency for Air Transport noncompliance with International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) safety standards. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has issued a Notice to Air Missions (NOTAM) prohibiting U.S. aviation operations into, out of, within, or over those areas of the Moscow Flight Information Region (FIR), the Samara FIR (UWWW) and the Rostov-na-Donu (URRV) FIR within 160NM of the boundaries of the Dnipro (UKDV) Flight Information Regions. For more information, U.S. citizens should consult the [Federal Aviation Administration's Prohibitions, Restrictions, and Notices](#).

The right of peaceful assembly and freedom of expression are not consistently protected in Russia. U.S. citizens should avoid all political or social protests and not photograph security personnel at these events. Russian authorities have arrested U.S. citizens who have participated in demonstrations.

Country Summary:

U.S. citizens, including former and current U.S. government and military personnel and private citizens engaged in business who are visiting or residing in Russia, have been interrogated without cause and threatened by Russian officials, and may become victims of harassment, mistreatment, and extortion.

Russian security services may fail to notify the U.S. Embassy of the detention of a U.S. citizen and unreasonably delay U.S. consular assistance. Russian security services are increasing the arbitrary enforcement of local laws to target foreign and international organizations they consider "undesirable."

Russian security services have arrested U.S. citizens on spurious charges, singled out U.S. citizens in Russia for detention and harassment, denied them fair and transparent treatment, and convicted them in secret trials or without presenting credible evidence. Furthermore, Russian authorities arbitrarily enforce local laws against U.S. citizen religious workers and have opened questionable criminal investigations against U.S. citizens engaged in religious activity. U.S. citizens should avoid travel to Russia to perform work for or volunteer with non-governmental organizations or religious organizations.

There have been multiple security incidents in southwestern Russia related to Russia's unprovoked and unjustified invasion of Ukraine. The Russian government declared martial law in Russia's regions bordering Ukraine (Bryansk, Kursk, Belgorod, Voronezh, Rostov, Krasnodar) on October 20, 2022. The martial law regime allows the rapid introduction of restrictive measures such as curfew, seizure of private property, restriction of entry/exit and freedom of movement, internment of foreigners, forced relocation of local residents, and restrictions on public gatherings. U.S. citizens should avoid all travel to these areas.

Recent legislation has expanded the ability of Russian authorities to detain, question, and arrest individuals suspected of acting against Russia's interests, including engaging with foreign and international entities, discrediting the Russian state or military, as well as advocating for the rights of LGBTQI+ persons.

Terrorist groups, both transnational and local terrorist organizations, and individuals inspired by extremist ideology continue plotting possible attacks in Russia. Terrorists may attack with little or no warning, targeting tourist locations, transportation hubs and systems, markets/shopping malls, local government facilities, hotels, clubs, restaurants, places of worship, parks, major sporting and cultural events, educational institutions, airports, and other public areas. Travel to the North Caucasus (including Chechnya and Mt. Elbrus) is prohibited for U.S. government employees and strongly discouraged for U.S. citizens.

The international community, including the United States and Ukraine, does not recognize Russia's purported annexation of Crimea as well as four other Ukrainian oblasts – Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson, and Zaporizhzhya – that Russia has purported to annex more recently. There is extensive Russian Federation military presence in these areas. Russia staged its further invasion of Ukraine, in part, from occupied Crimea, and Russia is likely to take further military actions in Crimea, and the four other Ukrainian oblasts are the subject of intensive fighting. There are continuing abuses against foreigners and the local population by the occupation authorities in these regions, particularly against those who are seen as challenging Russia's authority.

The U.S. Embassy in Kyiv continues to provide consular services to U.S. citizens in Crimea as well as four other Ukrainian oblasts partially occupied by Russia – Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson, and Zaporizhzhya, although the ongoing conflict severely restricts the Embassy's ability to provide services in these areas.

Read the [country information page](#) for additional information on travel to Russia.

If you decide to travel to Russia:

- * Read the Department of State's [COVID-19](#) page before planning any international travel, and read the Embassy COVID-19 page for country-specific [COVID-19](#) information.
- * Familiarize yourself with the information on what the U.S. government can and cannot do to assist you in a [crisis overseas](#).
- * Have a contingency plan in place that does not rely on U.S. government assistance. Review the [Traveler's Checklist](#).
- * Monitor local and international media for breaking events and adjust your contingency plans based on the new information.
- * Ensure travel documents are valid and easily accessible.
- * Visit our website for [Travel to High-Risk Areas](#).
- * Enroll in the [Smart Traveler Enrollment Program \(STEP\)](#) to receive Alerts and make it easier to locate you in an emergency.
- * Follow the Department of State on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).
- * Review the [Country Security Report for Russia](#).
- * Visit the CDC page for the latest [Travel Health Information](#) related to your travel.
- * Get a COVID vaccine to facilitate your travel.
- * Understand the COVID testing and vaccine requirements for all countries that you will transit through to your destination.

By [U.S. Mission Russia](#) | 13 February, 2023 | Topics: [Alert](#)

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