

Passengers Caught With \$20M in 8 Bags

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The  **Moscow Times**

Four male passengers have been detained at Moscow's Vnukovo Airport as they arrived from Istanbul with about \$20 million in cash, customs officials said Monday.

Three Azeri citizens and one Iranian attempted to enter the country without declaring the \$14.5 million and 4.1 million euros (\$5.4 million) they carried in four suitcases and four backpacks, the Federal Customs Service said on its web site.

The bills, in \$100 and 500 euro denominations, weighed 400 kilograms, said Larisa Ledovskikh, a spokeswoman for the customs service.

“This is a particularly large sum,” Ledovskikh said by phone. “I haven’t seen anything like it.”

The men are being held for failing to declare the currency before they entered the country, Ledovskikh said, declining to identify the men before they are charged.

Before Monday, Vnukovo, one of three international airports in Moscow, registered 382 violations of customs and currency laws totaling 75 million rubles (\$2.4 million) since the

start of the year. Nobody could immediately be reached for comment at the Iranian or Azeri embassies in Moscow.

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