

Transit Police Suspected of Demanding Cash for 'Right to Fly'

By [The Moscow Times](#)

August 29, 2012



Transit police are suspected of having defrauded airline passengers of thousands of rubles. **Andrei Makhonin**

Three criminal cases have been opened in connection with incidents of transit police officers at Moscow airports allegedly demanding cash from Uzbek and Tajik nationals for the right to board their flights, a news report said.

In at least three instances, officers at Domodedovo and Vnukovo airports are suspected of ordering Uzbek and Tajik nationals to give them 1,000 to 10,000 rubles (\$31 to \$311) each for the right to get on their flights, Moscow transportation investigators told Kommersant in a report published Wednesday.

In one incident in late May, transit police officers at Domodedovo stopped eight Uzbek nationals booked on a flight home at a security checkpoint and demanded 1,000 rubles from each of them "for permission to fly without hindrance," the report said, citing materials

from the criminal case. They all paid the money.

After the Uzbek citizens passed through immigration and customs and were at the gate, other police officers approached them and demanded an additional 2,000 rubles from each of them, threatening that they would not be able to get on their flight if they refused to pay. The Uzbek nationals paid again.

When they returned to Moscow in August, they told their employer, who reported the incident to the police.

In a separate incident also at Domodedovo airport, police officers demanded 10,000 rubles from an Uzbek woman for "the right to fly," Kommersant reported. Transit police at Vnukovo airport are suspected of having defrauded a Tajik national of 2,000 rubles, the paper said.

The suspects in the three criminal cases face charges of large-scale fraud with abuse of authority, an offense punishable by a fine of up to 500,000 rubles or two years' salary, or by up to six years in prison.

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