

400 Passengers Stranded Due to Closing of Village Airport

By [The Moscow Times](#)

October 04, 2012



Residents of the far northern city of Tiksi, above, have complained about the closing of a local airport.

Residents of an Arctic Ocean village have asked President Vladimir Putin to prevent the shutdown of a local airport, as 400 passengers were stranded in three airports Friday waiting for delayed flights to and from the village.

A thousand residents of the Sakha village of Tiksi signed a letter addressed to the president asking him to prevent the closing of the local airport for reconstruction, Interfax reported, citing Konstantin Shakhurdin, a district head in the Sakha republic.

The Defense Ministry has ordered the shutdown of the airport before year's end for urgent repairs of the airstrip and modernization of its infrastructure. The ministry has suspended flights from Oct. 1 to Dec. 31.

Residents complained in the letter that hundreds of people will not be able to travel to and

from Tiksi, a village of around 6,000 people on the Arctic Ocean near the Lena River delta, about 1,300 kilometers by air from the regional center Yakutsk.

Residents sent a similar letter to Defense Minister Anatoly Serdyukov on Wednesday.

In summer, ships cruise along the Lena from Yakutsk to Tiksi, while in winter only roads made of ice, snow and frozen dirt reach the village.

On Friday, about 100 passengers waited to depart from the Tiksi airport, while around 150 people in Moscow and another 150 in Yakutsk had flights to Tiksi. It was unclear why the flights had been scheduled given the Defense Ministry's order.

Yakutia Airlines, which had its flights cancelled, is planning to fly the stranded passengers between Tiksi and a neighboring village by helicopter and between the neighboring village and Yakutsk or Moscow by plane. The flights will run from Monday to Wednesday, the airline [said](#) on its website.

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