

Drunken Airline Passenger Accused of Attempted Hijacking

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Investigators on Friday opened a criminal case on charges of attempted hijacking against a passenger who caused a drunken debacle on an airplane bound for Egypt last month.

The passenger, Sergei Kabalov, was earlier accused of battery after crew members on the Moscow-Hurghada flight reported that he struck a male flight attendant and swore repeatedly during the flight.

But Kabalov now faces charges of attempted hijacking as well, the Investigative Committee's official spokesman Vladimir Markin said in a statement on the committee's website.

Markin also said investigators have so far been unable to locate Kabalov and that authorities are considering issuing a search warrant for him.

The latest accusation, which carries a maximum punishment of 10 years in prison, comes

after the committee questioned witnesses and studied video footage of the scandalous flight.

Kabalov was only prevented from hijacking the plane by the efforts of crew members working for the Kogalymavia airline, the statement said.

Kabalov's drunken episode is just one in a series of recent alcohol-fueled incidents on airplanes that have led to calls for a crackdown on onboard drinking.

On Feb. 3, a separate flight from Moscow was forced to land in Uzbekistan en route to Thailand after a Russian attacked other passengers.

Lawmakers have said parliament could draw up legislation to ban duty-free liquor from being brought on planes, even in sealed bags, in response to the brawls.

Alcohol consumption per capita in Russia is the fourth-highest in the world, according to World Health Organization figures for 2011.

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