

Court Demands \$30K From Russian Man for Drunken High Jinks on Flight

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The  **Moscow Times**

A Moscow court has ordered a man to pay nearly 1 million rubles in damages for drunkenly disrupting an Aeroflot flight in December 2012.

A spokesperson for the airline said in comments to Kommersant newspaper on Wednesday that the ruling by the Moscow City Court was unprecedented in the history of the company.

"There are about 1,000 cases of drunken debauchery on our company's planes each year. As a rule, the perpetrators get off with 500-ruble (\$14) fines. We usually only go through the courts in exceptional cases," the spokesperson said.

Up until now, he said, the maximum amount of compensation paid to Aeroflot in such cases was 700,000 rubles (\$20,000).

Vladimir Rakhimov was ordered to pay the record fine Wednesday for his behavior during a flight from the Spanish island of Tenerife to Moscow in 2012. According to Kommersant, the pilot was forced to make an emergency landing after Rakhimov first got into a fight with

his wife and then an altercation with other passengers who had tried to calm him down.

Passengers on the flight reported seeing the pair consume large amounts of alcohol before things got out of control.

Russian airlines have seen a spate of similar incidents in recent years. Just last month, a United Russia State Duma deputy faced an investigation over allegations he had threatened flight attendants and insulted other passengers while in an inebriated state.

The spokesperson for Aeroflot confirmed the frequency with which such incidents take place, saying the airline has a blacklist of about 2,000 people responsible for disrupting previous flights, Kommersant reported.

In February, a Russian businessman was sentenced to 3 1/2 years in jail and fined 400,000 rubles for attempting to hijack a plane while drunk. He had punched a male flight attendant and tried to enter the cockpit on a flight from Moscow to Egypt.

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