

Fleeing Russians Report Lengthy Interrogations at Airports

March 02, 2022



Igor Ivanko / Moskva News Agency

Russians leaving the country via a dwindling number of available routes are facing lengthy interrogations at airports, according to first-person accounts [published](#) by the MediaZona news website Wednesday.

Several men told the outlet they were flagged at passport control, where some of them were escorted to nearby holding areas and asked about their stance on Russia's invasion of Ukraine. At least two of them said they had their smartphones and laptops inspected for content including opposition and Ukrainian social media channels.

“When I was released [after 7 hours of questioning], they said I would most likely not be let out of the country,” Vyacheslav Ustenko was quoted as saying.

Ustenko, 21, said he was insulted and humiliated by an alleged Federal Security Service (FSB) agent.

“He said I was an anarchist, a traitor to the Motherland and that I was going to Ukraine to fight” purportedly on Kyiv’s side, he was quoted as saying.

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A screenshot of an online chat shared with The Moscow Times provided travel advice to maximize the chances of a successful exit amid reports of anti-war Russians leaving the country in droves.

“You need to have a return ticket on hand, say you’re flying on vacation, are neutral [toward the war in Ukraine] and delete Telegram,” it read.

At least 36 mostly Western countries have closed their airspace to Russia following President Vladimir Putin’s order to attack Ukraine, a move that was met by tit-for-tat measures by Russia’s aviation authority.

Meanwhile, activist Alyona Popova opened a recruitment database for independent Russian journalists to “find an employer who will get you and your family out.”

“As a longtime acquaintance of mine said, you should have gone into IT [because] it’s very difficult to leave as a ‘journalist’,” Popova [wrote](#) on Telegram.

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