



Written by [Veronika Kyrylenko](#) on February 14, 2022

State Department: Only Vaccinated Americans Can Flee Ukraine to Poland

The Biden administration is yet again “not leaving anyone behind” in a country that is on the brink of a war. This time, American citizens who are trying to flee Ukraine ahead of a potential invasion by Russia could do so by going to bordering Poland by land — but only if they are fully vaccinated against COVID. Those who are not vaccinated must seek some other way to save their lives.

The U.S. State Department [announced](#) Saturday that while “no advanced approval is required” for Americans to enter Poland from Ukraine, “U.S. citizens must present a valid U.S. passport and proof of COVID-19 vaccination.”



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In addition to that, although not necessarily required, “Travelers are also encouraged to present a negative test result from a PCR or antigen COVID-19 test, which will facilitate entry into Poland.”

Poland itself does not require COVID vaccination for foreign travelers entering Poland. According to the country’s COVID-related [travel rules](#), every person arriving in Poland from outside the Schengen area has to present a 24-hour-fresh negative COVID-19 test result. If a traveler is unvaccinated, he or she would have to submit to a seven-day quarantine upon entry.

Poland is also one of those countries that recognizes natural immunity as sufficient reason to consider a bearer “safe” to enter the country. Citizens of those countries that provide a document confirming that they had indeed been infected are welcome to skip the quarantine. That, however, is not the case with Americans.

U.S. citizens wishing to depart Ukraine by land to any other country should refer to the [Message to US Citizens: Ukraine Land Border](#) outlining country-specific COVID-19 entry requirements.

The situation between Ukraine and Russia seems to be deteriorating quickly, judging from the rhetoric and actions of top American officials.

President Joe Biden told [NBC News](#) on Thursday that things in Ukraine “could go crazy quickly.”

“American citizens should leave now,” the president added.

The outlet also said that, “according to a U.S. military and intelligence assessment, the Russian military could launch a full-scale invasion, with tanks that potentially could reach Kyiv, the capital, within 48 hours.”

Speaking with reporters on Friday, U.S. National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan said Americans should not wait and should leave Ukraine in the following 48 hours.

Per the Reuters [report](#),



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“We continue to see signs of Russian escalation, including new forces arriving at the Ukrainian border,” Sullivan told reporters. “We are in the window when an invasion could begin at any time.”

“If a Russian attack on Ukraine proceeds, it is likely to begin with aerial bombing and missile attacks that could obviously kill civilians without regard to their nationality,” he said.

On Saturday, the Biden administration [ordered](#) the U.S. Embassy in Kyiv to be evacuated, while the Department of Defense [pulled](#) nearly 160 members of the Florida National Guard from Ukraine to be repositioned “elsewhere in Europe.”

Given the urgency of the situation, it is not clear why unvaccinated Americans would not be allowed to go to Poland, where the U.S. is deploying [4,700 troops](#) from the 82nd Airborne Division.

At the same time, leaving Ukraine by air is becoming increasingly difficult. The State Department announcement came mere hours after KLM Royal Dutch airlines [said](#) the company was halting flights to and from Ukraine until further notice, citing pressing safety concerns.

On Monday, Ukraine International Airlines, the country’s biggest carrier, [said](#) it had received official notification from insurance companies terminating coverage of aircraft for its flights in Ukrainian airspace.

And earlier on Sunday, it was [reported](#) that “the leading aviation insurance companies” had warned airlines to postpone flights over Ukraine.

In light of such developments, it is highly likely that we will see other airlines following KLM’s suit.

According to the flight-tracking service Flightradar24, British Airways flights between London and Asia on Monday appeared to be avoiding Ukrainian airspace.

The news on the State Department’s announcement caused an uproar on social media. Canada’s [Post Millennial](#) captured some of the reactions:

Twitter users reacting to the announcement pointed out the apparent ridiculousness. “Get the shot, or get shot,” [one] Twitter user said....

Another critic said that “a freaking invasion is possible and they want to see proof of an ineffective shot.” A third commenter said the Americans should just travel through the United States-Mexico border where migrants face less stringent rules.

“No American left behind,” [said](#) another user, likening the current situation to the disastrous August 2021 U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan. Per recent [reports](#), as many as 9,000 American citizens were left in Afghanistan when the U.S. military withdrew from the country.

Today, those Americans who decide to stay in Ukraine should not expect to be rescued by the U.S. government in the case of Russian aggression. “U.S. citizens in Ukraine should be aware that the U.S. government will not be able to evacuate U.S. citizens in the event of Russian military action anywhere in Ukraine,” warned the State Department.

The department recommends that Americans staying in Ukraine take some “additional actions” that would keep them safer. Among such actions are regularly visiting the [website of the U.S. Embassy in Ukraine](#) to view the most recent safety and security alerts for U.S. citizens; staying in the loop on the



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news; ensuring travel documents are valid and easily accessible; and getting vaccinated against COVID “to facilitate your travel” from Ukraine.

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