

# Putin Wants Criminal Charges for Employers of Illegal Migrants

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Companies and individuals that employ and register illegal migrants should face criminal charges instead of fines, Prime Minister Vladimir Putin said Thursday.

Violations for arranging the illegal transit of migrants into Russia are currently punished with "a symbolic fine, and here the migration service is simply powerless," Putin said at a meeting of the Federal Migration Service, Interfax reported.

"I contend that here penalties of a criminal nature should be stipulated," Putin said.

Property owners who illegally register hundreds of people in their apartments should also face criminal charges, the prime minister said.

Putin also reiterated a proposal he made in an article published Monday, in which he wrote that migrants wanting to work in Russia should have to pass exams on Russian language and culture.

He said Thursday that the proper infrastructure should be built in countries with migrants wanting to come to Russia, to help them gain the necessary knowledge and qualifications to emigrate.

"This includes the creation of so-called pre-migration preparation centers, which include professional preparation, study of the Russian language, fundamental laws, cultural norms and traditions of the peoples of the Russian Federation," Putin said, Interfax reported.

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