

Estimate: 3.5 Million Migrants Toil Illegally

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There are 9.5 million foreigners in Russia registered by the Federal Migration Service, only 13 percent of whom have work permits, the agency's chief said Tuesday.

The data come from an automated information system that Konstantin Romodanovsky presented Tuesday, Itar-Tass reported.

Data from the system indicate that 41 percent of migrants, or more than 3.9 million people, are currently in Russia as nonworking migrants, meaning tourists, students, medical patients and other guests.

Thirteen percent, or more than 1.2 million, have work permits, while the remaining 46 percent are the "risk group," Romodanovsky said.

He said about 3.5 million people in that group have been in the country for more than three months and are therefore most likely working illegally.

The migration service chief said the number of migrants has held steady over the past four years, with almost no change from year to year.

One of the regions with the highest percentage of foreigners is Chukotka, on the northeastern border in the Far East, next to the Arctic Ocean in the north and the Bering Strait to the east.

The reason for such a high percentage of nonnatives there is that there are so few people at all, Romodanovsky said.

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