

Russia Ranks 2nd on Asylum List

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Russia was second only to Syria in terms of the number of asylum seekers it produced in 2013, a report published Friday by the United Nations has shown.

About 40,000 Russians applied for asylum in industrialized countries last year, with most seeking refuge in Poland and Germany, while Syria generated almost 56,400, according to the UN Refugee Agency's report, which analyzed trends in 44 industrialized countries across the globe.

Acceptance rates for people from Syria, Eritrea, Iraq, Somalia and Afghanistan were between 62 percent and 95 percent, but only 28 percent of Russian applications were successful, reflecting an overall trend for citizens from war-torn countries to be shown greater preference when submitting their applications.

The report also showed that the number of Russians seeking asylum has increased by almost 100 percent since 2012, when about 22,000 Russians submitted applications.

Volker Turk, the refugee agency's director of international protection, attributed the increase in Russian asylum applications to a "strong migrational element," traditionally associated

with the republic of Chechnya, where there have been many conflicts between separatist movements and Moscow in recent years, The Associated Press reported.

In all, Europe received about 484,600 asylum applications in 2013, marking a 32 percent increase compared to 2012. The U.S. received about 88,400 applications, and Australia received just more than 24,300, the report said.

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