

Russia Expects Millions of Crimeans to Apply for Russian Passports

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The Federal Migration Service expects millions of Crimeans to exchange their Ukrainian passports for a Russian version.

More than 2 million Crimean residents are expected to be issued a Russian passport within the next three months, a top migration service official said.

Federation Migration Service offices in the Black Sea peninsula have already handed out 2,500 new Russian passports after receiving 20,000 applications from Crimean residents, Federal Migration Service deputy head Sergei Kaluzhny said at a press conference in Moscow on Monday.

Kaluzhny said that the number of issued passports was expected to grow with each passing day and would exceed 2 million in three months, Interfax reported.

The FMS deputy head also said the organization had "gotten down to business" without waiting for the annexation of Crimea into the Russian Federation to be formalized.

"Many people have already applied for the Russian passports so there are lines. People want them as soon as possible," Kaluzhny said.

Following the outcome of the mid-March referendum in which an overwhelming majority of residents voted in favor of seceding from Ukraine and joining Russia, Crimeans were given one month to choose between Russian and Ukrainian citizenship.

Analysts have predicted 15 to 20 percent of Crimeans would refuse a Russian passport. However no Crimean residents have yet given up their Russian citizenship, head of the FMS Konstantin Romodanovsky said, Itar-Tass reported.

Also see:

[To Be Russian or Not To Be Russian, Crimea Residents to Decide on Citizenship](https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2014/03/24/russia-expects-millions-of-crimeans-to-apply-for-russian-passports-a33260)

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