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# Two Russians Stuck in India Over Visa Quandary

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The entrance to the city of Puttaparthi, India.

Two Russians have been barred from leaving India for the past three years following the Indian authorities' refusal to grant them exit visas.

Tatyana Kondratiyeva, 51, and her mother Olga, 77, have been living in India without visas since 2002, according to a spokesperson from Russia's General Consulate in Chennai.

"We have tried to help them," the spokesperson told The Moscow Times. "But they have not helped themselves. They have not provided Indian authorities with the proper documents to obtain an exit visa. They want everything to be done for them."

Tatyana and Olga Kondratiyeva first came to India in 2002 to volunteer at the Sai Baba Ashram, a monastic community in the city of Puttaparthi, about 400 kilometers northwest of Chennai.

"Living in the ashram without a visa was a very common practice among the community,"

Briton Daniel Lindsay, Olga's common-law husband, said by telephone. "This was tolerated by Indian authorities because they were volunteers. It was only a few years ago that the practice was no longer accepted and that Tatyana and Olga got stuck."

The women were also detained at an Indian private medical facility for five months, Lindsay said.

British member of parliament Dr. John Pugh and Brian Simpson, Chairman of the European Parliament's Transport and Tourism Committee, have written letters to the Russian Ambassador to Britain, Alexander Yakovenko, about the case.

"We are hoping that the letters will get to Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and that he will say 'enough is enough,'" Lindsay said.

Lindsay will be heading to India in the next few weeks to try to resolve the situation. He is also currently working on getting the women British visas.

The Indian Foreign Ministry's office in Chennai could not be reached for comment.

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