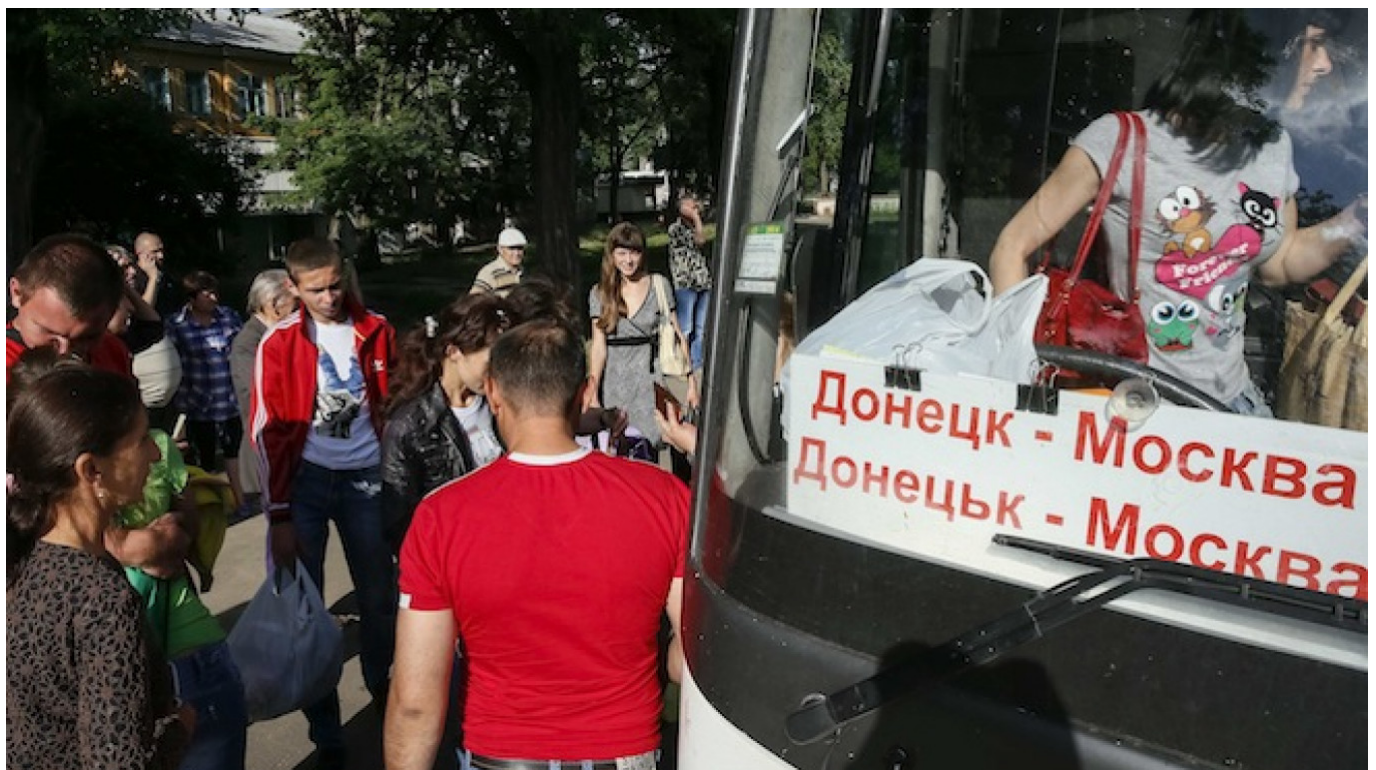


Russian Politicians Divided Over Number of Ukrainian Refugees

By [The Moscow Times](#)

June 06, 2014



Local residents board a bus to Moscow as they flee from the fighting in Slaviansk, in the eastern Ukrainian town of Kramatorsk.

With Ukrainian border guards disputing reports of masses of refugees crossing the border into Russia, it now seems Russian officials and lawmakers themselves cannot agree on exactly how many Ukrainians have applied for asylum.

While Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev said Thursday 4,000 Ukrainians had reportedly applied for refugee status at the Russian Federal Migration Service, the chairman of the State Duma committee for constitutional legislation on Friday gave a significantly lower number, citing only 800 applications.

"I think it is a tragedy, a humanitarian catastrophe that is currently getting worse [in Ukraine], but must stop," Vladimir Pligin told journalists at a news conference, Interfax reported.

Ukraine's border control service meanwhile issued a statement on Wednesday saying that not a single Ukrainian had applied for refugee status in Russia, without explaining how it gained access to this information.

Since violence broke out in Ukraine's east last March, Russia and Ukraine have repeatedly made conflicting claims about the situation at their common border.

Ukraine on Thursday evening announced it had shut down eight checkpoints in its eastern Luhansk and Donetsk regions, citing safety concerns.

See also:

[Russia Declares Emergency Over Ukrainian Refugees, Ukraine Denies Report](#)

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