

Moscow Mayor Sobyenin Says Migrant Crime Down 15 Percent

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Mayor Sergei Sobyenin

Mayor Sergei Sobyenin said Monday that the number of crimes committed by migrant workers has fallen by nearly 15 percent this year, TASS news agency reported.

About 900,000 migrants are legally employed in Moscow, according to Sobyenin, who also said this was the first time the city was able to pinpoint the exact number of official migrant workers.

Authorities still uncovered numerous migration violations, however, a reminder of the problematic relationship City Hall has with the migrant population and the persistence of the city's issues with illegal immigration.

"Since the start of the year, decisions have been made to deport 37,000 illegal migrants. Another 130,000 people were prohibited from reentering our country, and that's only in Moscow," Sobyenin was cited by TASS as saying on Monday.

The Federal Migration Service estimated late last year that the city had at least 3.5 million illegal migrants.

Sobyanin has made a point of imposing more regulations on migrant workers in a bid to crack down on the city's many immigration problems. Last December, he announced plans to cut the number of jobs for migrants in the housing services and public utilities sector by a third.

Dozens of open-air markets relying on migrant labor have also been shut down in recent years, a move that Sobyanin said would likely cut down on crime.

Starting in January, migrant workers will also have to pay a higher fee for a work license in Moscow: The price will go up from 1,200 rubles to 4,000 rubles, TASS reported.

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