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Moscow Ready to Squeeze Out Migrants If Unemployment Surges

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Sergei Sobyanin

The Moscow City Hall will increase the fees migrant laborers pay to work in the capital city if unemployment surges among Muscovites, Mayor Sergei Sobyanin told television channel Rossia-1 on Saturday.

"If we begin to see the rate of unemployment among Russians — Muscovites — is growing, then we will try to squeeze the migrant sector out by hiking up license fees," he said.

At the start of 2015, the fees migrant workers have to pay in order to work in Russia skyrocketed. In Moscow, the 600-ruble ($9.45) monthly fee to obtain a license to work rose on Jan. 1 to 4,000 rubles ($63).

Beyond the basic licensing fees, migrants wishing to work in Russia are required to undergo a series of medical examinations, register for medical insurance that costs 5,500 rubles ($87) annually, get fingerprinted and register with the migration authorities. Since Jan. 1, migrants have also been required to sit for a 3,000 ruble ($47) Russian-language and history test.

Despite the potential necessity of cuts, Sobyanin radiated confidence that Moscow will be able to get through the ongoing economic crisis without much pain. "I don't think that 2015 will be as scary as people say it will be," he said.

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