

Over Half of Moscow Region's Migrant Workers Are Employed Illegally

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Over half of migrant construction workers employed in the Moscow region are working in Russia illegally, a Moscow region migration official said Monday.

This means that around 200,000 of an estimated 370,000 migrant construction workers in the region either are not authorized to work or are in Russia illegally, Alexander Sychev, deputy head of the Moscow region branch of the Federal Migration Service, was quoted as saying in a regional government press release.

"Experience shows that every second migrant working in [the Moscow region] in the construction sector is employed illegally," Sychev said.

Moscow's construction sector has long been powered by immigrants from Central Asia,

attracted to the relatively high wages they can earn in the Russian capital compared to the depressed salaries of their home countries. According to the World Bank, half of working-age men from Tajikistan are working abroad, with the vast majority of them in Russia.

Immigration from Central Asia has slowed in recent months, however, as the ruble's fall of around 40 percent to the U.S. dollar since the beginning of last year makes the salaries to be earned in Russia less appealing. The Russian government has also introduced new bureaucratic barriers that make it both harder and more expensive to receive a Russian work permit.

The head of Russia's Federal Migration Service, Konstantin Romodanovsky, said during an interview with news channel Russia-24 in January that the number of migrants entering Russia had fallen by 70 percent year-on-year.

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