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For Russia, Donetsk and Luhansk passport holders are still Ukrainian citizens

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TASS

Russia is not giving special treatment to passport holders of two Ukrainian breakaway republics, despite the fact that the Kremlin has partially recognized the regions, according to the news website RBC.

This question of special treatment for residents of the breakaway regions was discussed in the Russian parliament mid-March with representatives of law enforcement agencies, a source from the State Duma said.

The legal ambiguity of the citizens of the self-proclaimed Donetsk and Luhansk republics stems from Vladimir Putin's executive order signed in February that recognized the passports of the breakaway republics as valid in Russia.

The move was widely regarded as the first step towards the official recognition of the two breakaway regions.

Holders of the passports are allowed to stay in Russia for 90 days visa-free. They are then are obligated to leave the country or obtain a residence permit like any other Ukrainian citizen in Russia.

Evgeny Bobrov, the chairperson of the Commission on Migration and Cross-National Relations of the President's Council on Human Rights told RBC that the citizens of Donbass republics are "indeed regarded by Russian authorities as Ukrainian citizens."

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