

U.S. Embassy in Moscow Says 'Too Early' to Know How Russian Measures Will Affect Visas

July 31, 2017



Artem Geodakyan / TASS

The U.S. Embassy in Russia has said it is still “too early” to say how large cuts in its staff will impact its consular operations and the issuing of visas for Russian citizens.

Russia’s Foreign Ministry announced on Friday it was ordering cuts to U.S. diplomatic staff in Russia to 455 employees by September, in response to a move by U.S. Congress to codify sanctions against Russia. The White House said on Friday President Donald Trump would sign the law.

In a televised broadcast, President Vladimir Putin said on Sunday 755 U.S. diplomats in Russia would lose their status.

Following the announcement, Michael McFaul, the former Ambassador to Russia under the

Obama administration, said on Twitter: “Russian citizens will be hit hardest by smaller U.S. staff at the embassy,” adding wait times would “increase dramatically.”

Embed:

Russian citizens will be hit hardest by smaller US staff at the embassy. Wait time for a visa to travel to US will increase dramatically.

— Michael McFaul (@McFaul) [31 июля 2017 г.](#)

In a separate Tweet he said “Russians should expect to wait weeks if not months to get visas to come to the U.S.”

Embed:

If these cuts are real, Russians should expect to wait weeks if not months to get visas to come to US. <https://t.co/YbyWsUJNJS>

— Michael McFaul (@McFaul) [30 июля 2017 г.](#)

The comments were widely reported on by Russian media, including the state-controlled TASS and Interfax news agencies.

In written comments to The Moscow Times the embassy distanced itself from McFaul’s prediction saying the Tweets represented his personal views.

“It is still too early to try and guess how [the measures] will affect consular operations but it’s certainly possible that it could reduce them,” it said.

Related article: [Russia Orders U.S. Embassy Staff Cuts in Sanctions Retaliation](#)

As of July 31, when the embassy’s website was last updated, it did not specify waiting time for visa processing.

The embassy described Moscow’s measures “regrettable and uncalled for.”

Original url:

<https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2017/07/31/us-embassy-says-staff-cuts-could-reduce-consular-operations-a58540>