The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Russia's Putin Extends Passport Offer to Ukraine Citizens

By Reuters

July 18, 2019



Alexander Reka / TASS

Russian President Vladimir Putin signed an order on Wednesday further expanding the number of Ukrainian citizens who can apply for fast-track Russian passports.

Moscow made the move ahead of a Ukrainian parliamentary election on Sunday, when a Russia-friendly party may become the strongest competitor of the more popular Servant of the People party, led by new president Volodymyr Zelenskiy, according to opinion polls.

The new order, published on the Kremlin website, amended Putin's earlier decree, which made it simpler for residents of separatist-controlled eastern Ukraine to apply for Russian passports.

According to the new document, residents of the neighbouring government-controlled parts of east-Ukrainian Donetsk and Luhansk regions can also use this procedure if they were

registered as permanently living there as of April 2014, when the conflict started.

Related article: Russia Opens First Center To Issue Russian Passports to East Ukrainians

Five years of war between Ukrainian troops and Russian-backed forces have killed 13,000 people despite a ceasefire signed in 2015. Zelenskiy has said he will do everything in his power to end the conflict.

Putin has already expanded the list of people eligible for fast-tracked passports by adding Ukrainians who once lived in Ukraine's Crimea region before it was annexed by Russia in 2014, and citizens of Iraq, Yemen, Syria and Afghanistan who were born in Russia during the Soviet era.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2019/07/18/russias-putin-extends-passport-offer-to-ukraine-citizens-a66461