The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Israel Denies Entry to Thousands of Russians Amid Asylum Spike – Haaretz

December 26, 2019



Valery Sharifulin / TASS

Israel has refused entry to nearly 6,000 Russians this year as it attempts to contain the increase in asylum applications from Russian travelers, the Haaretz newspaper reported Thursday.

Israeli officials have noted a surge in asylum requests from Russian citizens in recent years, leading officials to triple the number of times they denied entry to Russian citizens in 2018.

Related article: Russian Asylum Requests Spike in Israel, Officials Say

Officials at Israel's Ben Gurion Airport refused entry to 5,700 Russians in 2019, according to Haaretz. Russia's Embassy in Israel placed that figure at 5,771 last week.

That's up from 4,355 refusals in 2018, according to Haaretz.

"These large numbers of denied entries create disquiet on both sides," Shlomo Mor Yosef, the

head of Israel's Interior Ministry's Population and Immigration Authority, was quoted as saying.

Haaretz noted that the situation has further been complicated by Russia's jailing of Israeli-American citizen Naama Issacher on drug charges in November, as well as dozens of cases last week of Israeli nationals being held up on arrival in Moscow airports.

Related article: Russia Upholds U.S.-Israeli Woman's 7.5-Year Airport Marijuana Sentence

Israel turned down 180 asylum requests in the two months since it adopted new rules expediting asylum denials for Russian nationals, Haaretz reported.

Israel reportedly adopted similar expedited asylum processing rules for Ukrainian and Georgian nationals two years ago.

"We managed to deal with the Ukrainians and the Georgians and now we have begun with the Russians," Mor Yosef was quoted as saying.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2019/12/26/israel-denies-entry-thousands-russians-amid-asylum-spike-a68758