The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

2 in 5 Wartime Exiles Return to Russia – Izvestia

December 05, 2023



Sergei Kiselev / Moskva News Agency

Two in five Russians who fled the country in the months following Moscow's invasion of Ukraine have since returned home, the pro-Kremlin newspaper Izvestia reported Tuesday, citing data from an immigration support company and job recruitment website.

According to official statistics, 668,400 Russians left the country last year as war broke out in neighboring Ukraine, and then later as President Vladimir Putin announced a "partial" mobilization of reservists to boost Moscow's troop numbers on the battlefield.

Izvestia reports that the online recruitment giant HeadHunter placed the number of returnees since then at 26%, which is based on its analysis of job seekers' applications.

Finion, a company that provides foreign residence permit registration services, said its survey of 2,700 clients revealed the number of returnees at 40%.

Based on those figures, Izvestia estimated the number of returnees at between 174,000 (26%)

and 334,000 (40%).

Related article: 15% of Russians Who Fled War, Mobilization Have Returned – Survey

Tougher immigration rules and unemployment are the main reasons for Russians' return to their homeland, according to the publication's interviews with experts.

Other experts cited by Izvestia highlight salary increases for software engineers in Russia as another key reason for the emigres' return.

In October, researchers at the Florence-based European University Institute said their long-term survey of 5,000 Russian emigres in 60 countries revealed that 15% of them have returned either temporarily or permanently.

Putin — after describing the emigres as "scum and traitors" at the start of the Ukraine invasion in March 2022 — claimed this summer that half of all wartime emigres have returned to Russia.

Other high-ranking officials, like Deputy Security Council Chairman Dmitry Medvedev and State Duma Speaker Vyacheslav Volodin, have called for harsh punishment against Russians who have fled the war.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2023/12/05/2-in-5-wartime-exiles-return-to-russia-izvestia-a83321