The Moscow Times
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In First, Russia Strips Naturalized Citizens of Passports

December 13, 2023



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Two naturalized Russians have been stripped of their citizenship, Russia's Interior Ministry said Wednesday, marking the first such case since new legislation legalizing denaturalization went into force.

The amendments to Russia's citizenship laws, which came into effect in late October, list more than 60 crimes as grounds for losing citizenship, including spreading "fake news" about Moscow's invasion of Ukraine.

A Moscow court convicted the two recently naturalized men on drug-smuggling charges, the Interior Ministry said in a statement, noting that "their valid Russian passports have been seized."

It was not immediately clear from the statement whether the men were ordered to serve their sentences in a Russian prison or if they would be deported to their countries of birth.

Similarly, the Interior Ministry did not identify the former Russian citizens by name or country of origin and did not specify when the trial took place.

President Vladimir Putin submitted the draft legislation to Russian lawmakers last year following high-profile court rulings to strip climate activist Arshak Makichyan of his Russian citizenship and deport a Moldovan TikToker who parodied Russian soldiers.

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