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Russia Doubles Migrant Expulsions in 2024

By AFP

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Yuri Kadobnov / AFP

Russia said Wednesday it expelled more than 80,000 migrants in 2024, nearly twice as many as in 2023, as the country toughens its stance on migration after last year's Crocus City Hall terror attack.

More than 140 people were killed in the attack on the conference center in March, which was allegedly carried out by Tajik nationals and claimed by the Islamic State group.

"More than 80,000 migrants and stateless persons were expelled from Russia by court order," the state-run TASS news agency reported, citing bailiff services.

The number of expulsions in 2023 was 44,200, TASS said.

The report did not specify the nationalities of those expelled but most migrants in Russia are laborers from the former Soviet republics in Central Asia.

An expulsion order usually means that the person is banned from entering Russia for a period of five years.

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Raids against migrants have increased since the Crocus attack and officials have toughened anti-migrant rhetoric.

In September, parliament speaker Vyacheslav Volodin said lawmakers were working on 34 pieces of migrant-related legislation, including stopping family reunifications and banning migrants from certain jobs.

Several lawmakers have also proposed expelling migrants who do not speak Russian.

However, the economy depends on migration due to a deep demographic crisis and the recent reduction in the labor force due to the Kremlin's full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

Russia had relaxed laws to make it easier for migrants to obtain Russian citizenship, but naturalized citizens now need to register for military service or risk losing their passports and being expelled.

Some 10,000 of these naturalized Russians have joined Russian forces fighting in Ukraine, according to numbers released by Russian authorities last year.

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