The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Russians Told to Travel to Poland or Kazakhstan for U.S. Visa Interviews

September 08, 2025



Alexandra Mudrats / TASS

Russian citizens seeking U.S. visas for tourism, study or temporary work must now travel to Poland or Kazakhstan for their required interviews, the State Department said in an update released Saturday.

The change is part of new rules directing applicants for both non-immigrant and immigrant visas to schedule interviews in their country of nationality or residence. But in 16 countries, including Russia, Belarus, North Korea and Afghanistan, routine visa services are suspended, forcing applicants to travel elsewhere.

In 2021, the U.S. Embassy in Russia ceased offering non-diplomatic services, including non-immigrant visas, due to a Russian government ban on hiring local staff.

Under the new rules, Russians who hold legal residency elsewhere may apply where they live. Others must now travel to the U.S. Embassy in Warsaw, Poland or to the embassy in Astana, Kazakhstan.

That requirement may prove difficult in practice. Poland issues visas to Russian citizens only on a humanitarian basis, making it nearly impossible to book an appointment in Warsaw unless the applicant already lives in the European Union.

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“Applicants applying outside their country of nationality or residence should expect to wait significantly longer for an appointment,” the State Department warned. The new rules for non-immigrant visa interviews take effect immediately.

Starting Nov. 1, Russians and Belarusians seeking immigrant visas will be required to interview at the U.S. Embassy in Warsaw, according to an update announced last month.

Russians who are parents of adult U.S. citizens may also interview in Almaty, Kazakhstan or Tashkent, Uzbekistan, under the new arrangements.

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