

Civic  
Assistance  
Committee

2016





Refugees from other countries usually come to the Civic Assistance Committee (CAC) to find out how to receive asylum within the Russian Federation. CAC employees help refugees fill out asylum applications, appeal court dismissals or refusals from the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and, in cases when it could be dangerous for those people to return to their home country, assert their right of non-refoulement.

Photo above, on the left: a refugee from Ethiopia, who left his country for political reasons. He is still in the process of Refugee Status Determination. Despite his own difficulties and his financial situation he was, nevertheless, able to donate some money for migrants' children.

Photo above, on the right: Natalie from Congo. She and her twin children are now being treated for tuberculosis.

Photo below, on the left: happy Clarisse is embracing Committee employees; thanks to the organization, she and her son were able to reunite with her husband who fled from Congo to France.

Photo below, on the right: Martin, who fled from Africa to Russia due to political and religious issues. Now, his wife, their two children, and he are in the process of Refugee Status Determination. We wish them luck.

## Report 2016

4	<b>General Overview</b>
5	<b>Awards</b>
5	<b>Guests</b>
6	<b>Statistics</b>
10	<b>Refugees</b>
11	<b>Refugees from Ukraine</b>
12	<b>Refugees from Syria</b>
14	<b>Refugees from North Korea</b>
16	<b>Stateless persons</b>
18	<b>Labor migrants</b>
20	<b>Assistance for victims of hate crimes</b>
22	<b>Protecting the rights of North Caucasians in prison</b>
24	<b>Integration projects</b>
26	<b>Medical aid</b>
27	<b>Humanitarian assistance</b>
28	<b>The Committee's Internet Presence</b>
28	<b>Publications</b>
29	<b>Volunteers</b>

# General Overview

The most significant event in the sphere of migrant policy in the Russian Federation in 2016 was the dissolution of the Federal Migration Service and the delegation of its powers to the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

This was done through Decree No. 156 of the President of the Russian Federation dated April 5, 2016 *On the Improvement of Government Control over Drug Trafficking, psychotropic Substances and their Precursors in the Sphere of Migration*.

In accordance with the Decree, the Federal Migration Service and the Federal Drug Control Service (FDCS) were dissolved as isolated institutions, and two new departments were established within the Ministry of Internal Affairs. For the FDCS, this reorganization was probably more or less logical given the Service only had control functions. But the same cannot be said for the Federal Migration Service that was, besides executive functions common for the MIA, also responsible for giving asylum, accepting and accommodating asylum seekers, integrating them and organising their employment.

It has become clear now that when it is a question of migration policy, the MIA will be focused almost exclusively on the fight against illegal migration. Besides, the total number of former FMS employees was reduced 30 per cent.

It is also worth mentioning that the FMS has already undergone reorganization 9 times since its foundation in 1992. This alone hinders public authorities in the

migration sphere from properly functioning. Moreover, the FMS operated as a part of the MIA only once before in 2001 and that cooperation proved not very successful. Furthermore, the Decree of 2016, caused a more complicated reorganization.

The Decree completely destroyed the system of migration control. While earlier local migration agencies obeyed the FMS and were called Offices of the FMS in territorial entities of the RF, now there are local Offices of the Main Directorate for Migration Affairs of the MIA instead. This means, that the status of the local Office's chief (for example, in Moscow) fell: his direct superior is now the director of the Main Directorate of the MIA in Moscow and not the director of the Main Directorate for Migration Affairs of the MIA.

Clearly, the work of migration agencies has become more complicated and foreigners now have problems with their applications. Just entering an office has also become difficult as policemen watchfully guard the entrance from any and every one who seems "undesirable" to them. Any one who comes without an invitation or documents and does not speak Russian, faces hostility. The policemen, as well as their superiors, are completely unaware of their duty to help refugees. Visiting an office of migration agencies became dangerous for asylum seekers because they are often transferred directly to court instead of being interviewed for refugee status. Moreover, the judge makes decisions on administrative deportation indiscriminately. The only way to prevent such situations is to provide refugees with both a lawyer

and a translator, which is a difficult task for noncommercial organizations.

It should come as no surprise, that the migration agencies have a high rate of attrition. Many professional employees were replaced by workers of the MIA. For instance, the head of the department on asylum issues in Moscow is actually a cynologist — a canine handler. The realization of "the Conception of Migration Policy in the Russian Federation until 2025" is, therefore, still far away.

# Awards

In September, 2016 the CAC chair Svetlana Gannushkina became a Laureate of the Right Livelihood Award, which is promoted as an “Alternative Nobel Prize.” Svetlana Gannushkina was awarded for “Long service aimed at the promotion of human rights and fairness for refugees as well as tolerance between various ethnic groups.”



The award included EUR 80,000.00 in prize money. All of the money was donated to the Committee to provide assistance for refugees and organize jointly with the Memorial society seminars for lawyers and activists who help migrants.

# Guests

Filippo Grandi, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, together with his colleagues have visited the Committee to see firsthand and better understand the problems refugees and stateless persons face in Russia. The High Commissioner had the opportunity to see just how many people apply for assistance and which difficulties they have.



# Statistics

The FMS's regular publications on migration statistics in Russia — especially statistics concerning asylum seekers — proved very useful.

There is no way to access such information for the year 2016, but some statistical information can be found on the website of the Russian Federal State Statistics Service. The data, however, published there are not as comprehensive as those of the former FMS.

	People with refugee status		People granted asylum	
	As of January 1, 2017	As of January 1, 2016	As of January 1, 2017	As of January 1, 2016
<b>Total</b>	598	770	228 392	313 707
Azerbaijan	8	9	10	9
Afghanistan	292	352	417	572
Georgia	34	52	226	292
Kazakhstan	1	1	3	4
Kyrgyzstan	2	3	21	48
Russian Federation	-	-	-	-
Syria	2	2	1317	1302
Tajikistan	7	10	26	14
Turkmenistan	-	-	7	12
Uzbekistan	18	19	82	79
Ukraine	188	273	226 044	311 134
<b>Other countries</b>	46	49	238	241

*Distribution of people given Refugee Status and asylum by country of origin (according to the Federal State Statistics Service)*

If we remove Ukrainian citizens from the statistics, then only 2348 people from other countries have been granted asylum in Russia by the end of 2016. This is the lowest number since 2008.

Year	Refugee Arrivals	Refugees that Left	Net Increase
2015 total	598 617	353 233	245 384
2015 from the CIS	536 157	298 828	237 329
2016 total	575 158	313 210	261 948
2016 from the CIS	511 773	256 480	255 293

*Data on migrants coming for 9 months and longer  
(according to the data of the MIA)*

	Work-related	Tourist	Private	Permanent Residency	Transit	Service Employees	Attaining Citizenship	Total
2015								
Total	7 517 070	2 937 447	20 891 969	1 102	444 862	1 936 720	17	33 729 187
The CIS	4 552 869	160 081	16 882 815	1 033	387 159	884 797	-	22 868 754
2016								
Total	7 038 1093	266 975	18 949 189	621	387 646	1 823 942	56	31 466 538
The CIS	4 027 461	141 014	15 711 384	570	343 220	907 415	14	21 131 078

*Distribution of foreigners by purpose of entry  
(according to the data of the Border Service)*

**Last year in 2016, 60 042 foreign citizens were deported. In 2015—117 493.**

**Last year in 2016, 229,013 foreign citizens were banned from entering. In 2015—490 893.**

Therefore, the migration legislation in 2016 became a little less strict compared to that of 2012–2013. This could be a result of preparations for the FIFA World Cup. It could also be part of attempts to protect workers: employers often apply to lawyers from non-governmental organizations for assistance.

Country	03.09.2014	01.10.2015	01.10.2016	Difference, per cent
Azerbaijan	610 159	537 475	531 471	- 13
Armenia	531 691	518 731	523 124	- 2
Belarus	476 187	622 786	741 453	55
Kazakhstan	581 257	704 535	613 067	5
Kyrgyzstan	550 136	519 487	582 863	6
Moldova	582 375	525 903	490 844	- 16
Tajikistan	1 163 199	967 751	999 035	- 14
Uzbekistan	2 509 666	2 038 155	1 779 002	- 29
Ukraine	2 446 123	2 596 092	2 581 380	5

*The number of foreign citizens from the CIS remaining in Russia to date (according to the statistics of the Main Directorate for Migration Affairs)*

**265 319 foreign citizens were granted Russian citizenship in 2016 compared to 209 799 in 2015.**



*Many refugees come to Russia with a spouse and children. Others start a family and during their time in Russia. The fact that they have a family, however, does not give them any advantage in applying for asylum in the Russian Federation.*



# Refugees

The situation for asylum seekers in Russia has clearly not improved. As one can see from the data, only 598 people with refugee status were in Russia as of January 1, 2017. At the same time, the number of people granted asylum fell significantly. This can be explained not only by widespread rejections to asylum seekers, but also by the dramatic increase in the number of Ukrainians being given Russian citizenship instead of asylum.

Although, the institution of asylum does not function well in Russia, there are some significant differences between various refugee groups.

To summarize, below several larger tendencies noticed over the course of 2016 are listed:

- Lack of access to asylum application
- Inability to register migration due to a lack of “receiving party” for refugees;
- Unofficial employment and non-payment of (withholding) salaries;
- Problems with access to the State Program to Assist Voluntary Resettlement to the Russian Federation of Compatriots Living in Former USSR Countries (for example, problems with official employment or an unreasonable month-long wait for application processing);
- Fines for missing registration;
- Delays in the asylum decision making process;
- Difficulties with medical aid and education.



# Refugees from Ukraine

The Committee has helped Refugees from Ukraine since 2014, when the Ukrainian crisis first began. When Ukrainians started fleeing en masse from the war zone, Russian authorities and Russian civic society provided them with all the necessary assistance and gave them preferred treatment in formulating documents.

Since the middle of 2014, however, it became more and more difficult for Ukrainian refugees to get that assistance. At the end of the year, Ukrainian refugee camps closed and temporary residence for Ukrainians ended in 2015.

At the same time, the Ukrainians taking part in the State Program of Support for the Resettlement in the Russian Federation of Compatriots were welcomed. They were able to receive the registration and Russian citizenship in a fast-track procedure.

In 2016, the lines for migration agencies got much longer because the departments' staff was reduced "for the sake of optimization".

Ukrainians applying for asylum or refugee status faced difficulties. Those who do not have any relatives in the regions they came to could not even make an ap-

plication because their documents were not accepted. The denials were appealed in court, in the Head Department of the MIA or to the human rights ombudsman. In some cases, the appeals were sustained: the migration authority accepted the applications, but, regardless, asylum was not granted.

Simultaneously, the number of Ukrainian asylum seekers deported increased significantly.

While many wanted to return to Eastern Ukraine in 2015, in 2016, the majority of those who came to Russia decided to stay. Many of them had lost their home as the result of hostilities.

In 2016, Ukrainians asked lawyers for help with various problems: parallel to asylum, temporary stay, and citizenship issues, they were also interested in replacing or receiving documents outside Ukraine, receiving benefits or pensions, marriage annulment, and mortgage services. Many of them needed medical aid, which was difficult to provide. Ukrainians could not receive an obligatory medical insurance policy because they did not have registration. That is why they could only get emergency medical services.

# Refugees from Syria



According to the FMS, as of April 5, 2016, there were only 7096 Syrian citizens in the Russian Federation. As of April 5, 2015, there were 8205. Those numbers include embassy officers and their families, as well as those who came before the Syrian Civil War.

By the beginning of 2016, more than 5 million Syrians fled Syria in search of safety. The majority went to Turkey (about 2,9 million by August, 2016), Lebanon (about 1,5 million by December of 2015), Jordan and Germany.

For refugees who do not speak Russian, it is nearly impossible to apply for asylum. Therefore, refugees need help from a lawyer or an employee of a non-governmental organization. In Russia, the right of foreigners to apply for asylum is often unreasonably

violated. The Committee employees have witnessed refugees being transferred to police stations for deportation right from the migration authority they had just applied to for asylum.

That is why a refugee should be accompanied by a lawyer and or translator, who can help prevent any rights violations.

Unfortunately, despite the significant number of Syrians in Russia, the general practice of their non-refoulement based on UNHCR recommendations, and the well-known political situation in Syria, Russian

migration agencies have continued to reject their applications for asylum. In some cases, Syrians were deported to Turkey or even back to Damascus, Syria. Usually, when the officers explain their decision, they state that Syria is already a secure enough area according to information provided by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Defence.

In 2016, the number of rejections increased. During the first half of 2016, the Committee helped 82 people with the asylum application. Out of a total of 82 migration agency decisions, 57 were denied

asylum and 17 were denied asylum renewal. Only 8 people received positive answers for their applications (7 were granted asylum and 1 renewed asylum).

Some of the denials were successfully appealed in court with the help of lawyers, but the larger picture is one of frustration.

**Men are not the only ones to face rejection for asylum renewal — even pregnant women from Syria have been rejected. On March 4, 2016, the renewal application of Syrian woman W., 6 weeks pregnant at the time, was denied by the FMS office in Moscow oblast (region). The explanation states, among other things, that the woman “did not prove that she is in more danger than other people in Syria. Almost the entire population of the country faces difficulties. Syrians’ unwillingness to return to their native country is explained more by the bad economic and humanitarian situation in Syria”.**

At the same time, the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic published a report made by the UN Human Rights Council based on an investigation in 2016, that says that women in Syria are in danger of rape. Pregnant women lack adequate medical attention and maternity clinics are constantly subject to bombings.

# Refugees from North Korea

Russian authorities are aware of the fact that the North Korean government quite literally hunts for those who have fled from North Korea. Nevertheless, the Russian Federation and North Korea signed an extradition agreement that pertains to illegal migrants and legal assistance in searching for them.

In signing the agreement, Russia impinges upon people's right to live. In 2016, the Committee helped a North Korean citizen attain asylum. After having reached Russia, he was still not safe and later resettled elsewhere with the help of the UNHCR. He undoubtedly fled North Korea due to emergency circumstances. His decision to flee was spurred by the attention he was receiving from journalists.



Kim's life story reads like a thriller. He fled North Korea twice. The first time was in 1997: he fled the country, because he suffered from hunger like thousands of people in North Korea did at that time. Kim was an orphan. The university he was studying at closed, so at 17 he wound up on the street with few prospects to earn a living. Kim first fled to China where he lived as an illegal immigrant for about 10 years. He could not get asylum there because China is not a member of the 1951 Refugee Convention, which means it has no legislation regarding the status of refugees.

Later, Kim decided to flee to Russia, but because he used an old map of the USSR, he crossed the border into Kazakhstan. He was caught at the border by a Chinese guard and was deported back to North Korea. There Kim was imprisoned without charge or trial. With two other prisoners, Kim escaped and fled to China again.

In the spring of 2014, Kim crossed the border into Russia near Amur oblast (region). He asked the border guards for help because he read somewhere that there was a refugee camp in Siberia. Despite Article 31 of the 1951 Refugee Convention, he was arrested for crossing the border illegally. Kim's lawyer, Lyubov Tatarets, who works for the office of Memorial society in Blagoveshchensk, mentioned several times that during the interrogations Kim asked numerous times for permission to apply for asylum. He was only able to speak with FMS employees before he launched his hunger strike. Kim was released from prison several months later. The Civic Assistance Committee helped him come

to Moscow, where he applied for refugee status.

In 2014, Kim received his first rejection. With help from Roza Magomedova, a lawyer from the Memorial society, and Yelena Burtina, a Civic Assistance Committee employee, he appealed the decision in court. The court ruled the decision made by the FMS illegal.

Kim applied for refugee status once again, but his application was rejected a second time. His next application for asylum was rejected in January of 2016. The FMS stated that Kim could not prove that he would have been killed in North Korea.

Yelena Burtina published a Facebook post on Kim's experience applying for asylum that quickly spread through the media. The FMS later changed their decision: Kim's application was accepted and on May 26, he was finally granted asylum in Russia.

Some time later, Kim received the decision on his resettlement which was possible thanks to the UNHCR. Kim grew accustomed to facing constant difficulties and solving them himself. Therefore, he tried to organise his resettlement on his own. Kim realized, however, that he could not buy a plane ticket without a visa, so he decided to go by boat. After all the trials and tribulations, it crossing the ocean on an inflatable boat seemed quite easy. During his trip, however, unfavorable weather and storms forced him to turn back.

While Kim attempted his trip, the Committee staff panicked because they

could not contact or find him. No one could believe that Kim would not wait for assistance and would instead try to resettle on his own. Fortunately, Kim came to the Committee after he returned from his failed trip. Finally, he received a plane ticket and two visas: one to enter the country of resettlement and the second to leave Russia, both quite difficult to attain.

# Stateless persons

The majority of stateless people residing in Russia are citizens of the former USSR, who for various reasons were not granted citizenship from the successor state governments of former member states of the Soviet Union.

In 2016, Committee employees took close interviews with several stateless persons and gave them recommendations for collecting necessary documents. When necessary, the Committee helped prepare the applications to the Main Directorate for Migration Affairs. Sometimes CAC employees accompany stateless persons to the migration agencies. Today, the Committee is helping 80 stateless persons in total.

Substantial financial support is needed to offer assistance to stateless persons. The money goes to such necessities as consular charges, state duties, document verification and translation, as well as the travel costs associated with acquiring all of these.

Most stateless persons are single, homeless, unemployed, and in many cases also sick. Many of them can not obtain legal status for a long time, partly because they do not have enough money. Therefore, financial assistance to stateless persons is the most effective way to help. In 2016, the Committee provided stateless persons with

the money they needed for paying off all the fees incurred in the process of obtaining legal status. The money was collected through private donations, some of which came from the Committee's very own employees.

**Thanks to Chapter 8 of the Federal Act on Russian citizenship it is a little bit easier to help stateless persons than refugees. With help from the Committee, six stateless persons received Russian passports last year. Six more applied for Russian citizenship, one person received a temporary residence permit and another one applied for a temporary residence permit. This means 14 cases in total were successful, or almost 20 per cent of all cases by the end of 2016.**



# Labor migrants

According to the migrants, their labor and employment rights are regularly violated through the loss of labor contracts (although the contract does not guarantee safety from other violations), non-payment of salary (withholding) or for overtime work. In 2016, the total debt of various employers to migrants who appealed to the Committee for help amounted to 8,9 million rubles.

Last year, Gulnara Bobodzhanova, a lawyer from the Committee, succeeded in forcing utility service providers in Butovo to pay off their debt to a group of street cleaners from Uzbekistan. This is how Khurramov and his wife Khudaykulova received 180,000 rubles.

Right after the employers discovered that the Uzbeks wanted to fight for their rights, the street cleaners were fired. Moreover, the police visited Khurramov the next day to check his documents. Both Uzbeks had work permits, but the policemen “could not find” the information on their registration in the database. Therefore, Khurramov and his wife were transferred to the police office and then to court.

The judge did not sit in on the case because there was no document from the

**In 2016, 223 labor migrants applied to the Committee for help. CAC employees assisted them as they went to law-enforcement and regulatory authorities and held negotiations with employers. Labor migrants also received legal and social assistance (consultations, preparation of court appeals, financial and medical aid).**

migration agencies confirming that the family was not registered. Gulnara Bobodzhanova said, “the judge probably would not have paid attention to the lack of evidence if they had not been accompanied by a lawyer and would have instead just deported them from Russia.”

In 2016, as a result of negotiations with employers, appeals to courts and regulatory authorities (including cases when people applied for help earlier) the Committee forced employers to return their debts to migrants in the amount of 2,9 million rubles.



In general, the attitude toward labor migrants over 2016 has not changed much. Xenophobia is still widespread. Citizens of particular countries are regarded as dangerous strangers. Moreover, there are still no programs for the integration and adjustment of labor migrants in Russia. On the contrary, after the dissolution of the FMS, the MIA deals mainly with labor migrants, and the Ministry is no longer responsible for the creation and launch of integration and adjustment programs.

The number of Tajiks and Uzbeks staying in Russia dropped significantly from September of 2014 to October of 2016: a 29 per cent drop in the number of citizens from Tajikistan and a 14 per cent drop in the number of citizens from Uzbekistan.

Citizens from the four Central Asian countries of Uzbekistan, Tajikistan,

Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan constitute the majority of labor migrants in Russia, and within that time frame only the number of Kyrgyzs increased (by 6 per cent).

This can most likely be explained by the fact that Kyrgyzstan has recently joined the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), so Kyrgyz citizens are no longer required to have a work permit in Russia. Therefore, they do not need to pay fees and collect numerous documents to be allowed to work legally.

Evidence gathered by CAC employees present at court sessions in 2016 as well as stories told by labor migrants and refugees demonstrated that the rights of foreign citizens are violated regularly. Sometimes a judge reviews 40–50 cases, sometimes more, on Part 3 Article 18.8 Part 2 Article 18.10 of the Code of Administrative Violation. For each case the judge spends

no more than a couple of minutes. More details can be found in the Committee's report titled "Moscow governmental apparatus on the deportation of migrants slowed down in 2016, but nevertheless continues."

# Assistance for victims of hate crimes

Since 2011, the Committee is especially concerned with people suffering from crimes committed on ethnic grounds. The Committee documents evidences from those whose rights have been violated and who later visit our office or make a call to our hotline: (8 903–577–55–87). The Committee also helps people approach the police and provides legal and medical assistance. Every act of aggression committed because of racial or religious differences is dangerous both for the victim and for society as a whole because it stirs fear and fuels ethnic and religious conflicts.

In the spring of 2016, the organization received evidence of 25 aggressive acts, committed due to differences in ethnicity, religion, or sexual orientation. Twelve of these cases happened in 2016: 7 asylum seekers and 5 labor migrants were attacked.

In 2016, the Committee provided 339,408 rubles to victims of such crimes.

This money was partially spent on surgeries for those injured.

Since 2015, the Committee in cooperation with the Information Analysis Centre SOVA has created an interactive map of crimes committed on ethnic grounds. In 2016, more than 300 cases of ethnic attacks that happened in 2010–2015 were added to the map. The map was used by activists as well as journalists to control court sessions and shed light on the problem of hate crimes.

The map has been viewed by 24,218 people in total, 9,585 of them — in 2016.



Sulaymon Saidov was shot in the Moscow metro and sustained a bullet wound. He did not do anything wrong, he was assaulted simply because he is not Russian. On April 8, 2016, the thirty eight-year-old Tajik was on his way from work to metro station Tyopliy Stan. His nephew Muhamajon Khakimov, 19 years old, was also present during the attack.

At metro station “Profsoyuznaya” a drunk man stumbled into the metro car. He saw Muhamajon, approached him and started to push him and shout: “Who are you?! Where are you from?! What are you doing here?!” “I’m from Tajikistan,” responded Muhamajon. The man started to threaten them, calling them “black monkeys” and demanding they leave the metro car immediately because, as he said, it is “only for Russians.” Muhamajon turned to his uncle for help. Sulaymon then stood up and hid the scared boy behind him. Then he tried to calm Muhamajon down by saying, “Don’t pay any attention, he’s just drunk.”

The man looked Sulaymon right in the eyes and said “In three minutes you’ll be dead. I’m gonna kill you!” As Sulaymon later said, he was not afraid of the old man who seemed weak and his threats seemed ridiculous. Even when Sulaymon saw the



gun in the man’s hand he thought it was a toy. Unfortunately, it was a real pneumatic gun and the man then shot Sulaymon.

Muhamajon was not hurt, but Sulaymon was shot three times in the head and one in the stomach. One bullet hit his eye.

The emergency ambulance was called for Saidov and the attacker, Sergey Tsarev, was arrested. A police officer Ilyinskiy started to interview witnesses and write up a protocol. Sulaymon’s cousin, Dilshod Saidov, came to help Muhamajon with the translation. But when Ilyinskiy read the protocol, Dilshod was shocked by the discrepancy between the document and Muhamajon’s testimony of the events. “According to the protocol, Muhamajon provoked the man by the mere fact that he exists!” he said indignantly. “I had to force the police to correct the document and spent two hours on that alone. They tried to pressure me, too. They said they would also check all my documents. But my documents were in order. Yes, that night in the police office was just terrible!”

In 2016, the Committee collected 160,000 rubles in private donations to pay for Sulaymon’s surgery. A lawyer from the association of Migration and Justice



(society Memorial), Filipp Shishov, represented Saidov’s interests in court. Forensic investigators diagnosed Tsarev (the accused) with a “temporary psychological disorder in the form of emotional and behavioural disorder associated with the disorder of integration,” and he was transferred from a remand prison to a psychiatric hospital.

Filipp Shishov: “Now, Tsarev is in involuntary treatment. We will demand compensation for the financial and non-pecuniary damages, partially in the form property arrest. We will also need to investigate all the circumstances of the crime on ethnic grounds. We assume that the judge will discharge the accused by ruling him insane.”

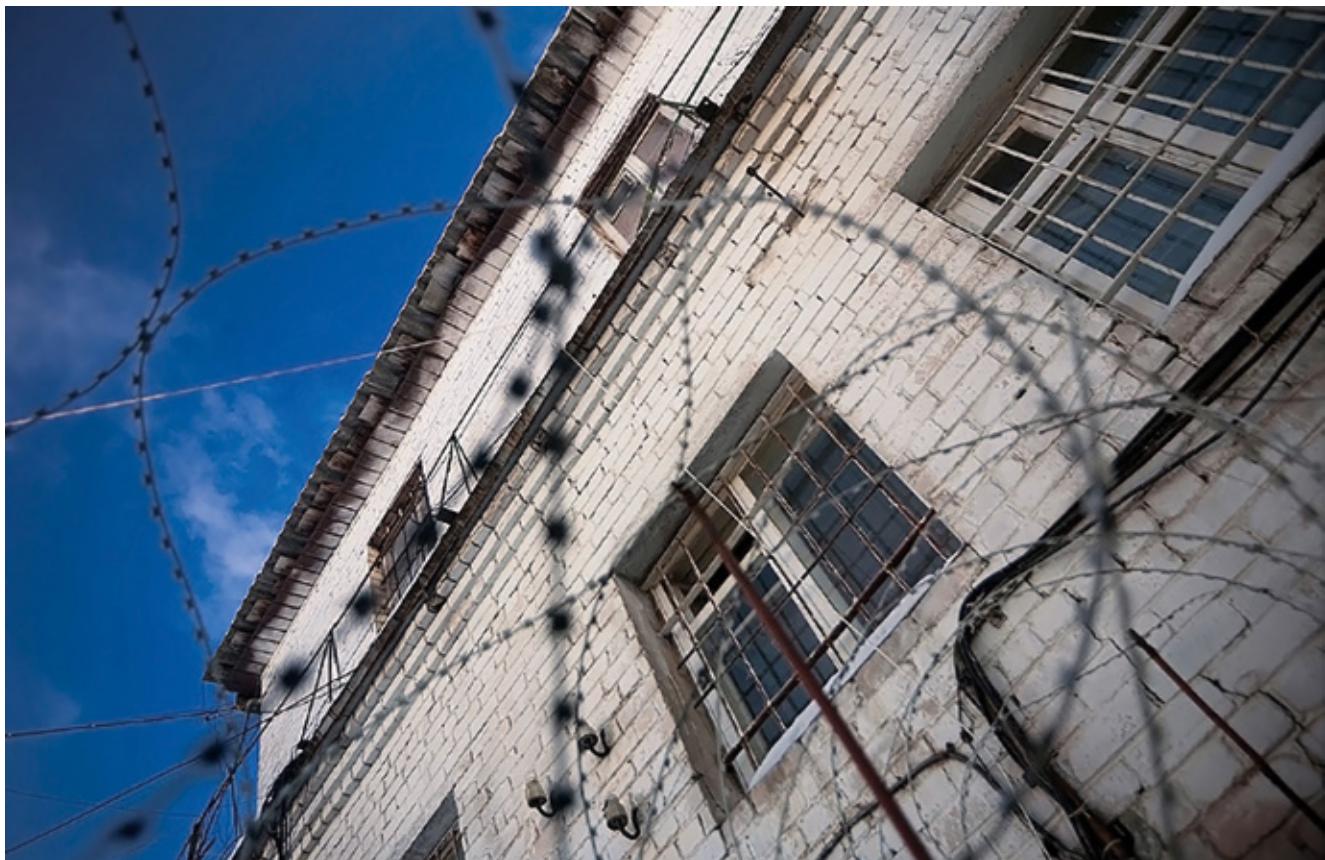
# Protecting the rights of North Caucasians in prison

Although prisoners' rights are often violated within the Russian penitentiary system, prisoners from the North Caucasus suffer such violations disproportionately more than other prisoners. They are harassed by prison staff and discriminated against on ethnic and religious grounds.

In an effort to help North Caucasians in prison, CAC employees maintain official correspondence with authorities, courts, and prison administrations. More serious cases and complaints are filed to the European Court of Human Rights (3 complaints within 2016). In 2016, the ECHR also reviewed 4 complaints from Committee lawyers filed in 2015. Today, all of the cases are pending. Regardless, the situation has improved noticeably since those who addressed complaints to the ECHR are no longer subject to rights violations from prison staff and even receive necessary medical aid.

Another part of the assistance program is a hotline in the Chechen Republic and the Republic of Ingushetia (352 consultations provided in 2016). Personal reception of citizens is organised in offices in Chechnya, Ingushetia and Moscow.

Usually, those who seek the Committee's help are relatives of prisoners. The majority of them complain about discrimination from the prison personnel, regular arbitrary and unjustified disciplinary sanctions or punishments, interference in performing religious rituals, violation of nutritional standards, lack of appropriate medical attention, rejection of release for health reasons, as well as threats, insults, and pressure from the Federal Security Service. Finally, prisoners sometimes experience physical abuse from the prison staff and other prisoners.



Protecting the rights of North Caucasians in prison includes efforts of the CAC employees to provide medical aid. Their right to consult a doctor is constantly violated. It is often the case that the necessary aid is provided only after the ECHR reviews the complaint. In one such complaint filed in 2016, one of the Committee's lawyer described one Chechen prisoner's problem: after he was diagnosed with fourth stage cancer

he was not released, not given access to surgery in a specialized clinic and not provided with any of the necessary medicine. The man could not even sleep because of the pain.

This complaint has already been accepted and is now under review. Committee employees hope that the violation of the prisoner's rights will be put to an end in the near future.

# Integration projects

In March, 2016, the Committee opened an integration centre for Syrian refugees in Noginsk. Then in November, 2016 — in Losino-Petrovsky (both towns in Moscow region). By the end of the year there were 38 children studying Russian, English, Arabic and mathematics in these centres. During the year, the children had excursions and visited theatres and museums accompanied by employees of the centre.

Moreover, the centre for adaptation and education of children refugees in Moscow, continued its work in 2016, offering places for 45 children.

Studying at the Committee's centres is a significant part of the integration program for children refugees who are affiliated with CAC. Although the Law on Education theoretically provides schools for children who do not speak Russian as their native language, in reality there are only two free schools in Moscow that offer the such services for free. At the same time, there are a lot of children who do not speak enough Russian to perform well in public schools.

Committee employees also help children of migrants register for regular schools.

The Committee regularly receives complaints from foreign citizens whose children are not admitted into schools due to the lack of residential registration. Head teachers and regional departments of education explain the rejections referring to the Order 32 On Adoption of Admission Regulations for Primary, Basic and Secondary General Education issued by the Ministry of Education and Science of Russia on January 22, 2014.

It states that foreign citizens should have proof of residential registration upon applying for admittance to the school. It was considered compulsory and not just desirable. In 2015, this part of the Order was successfully overturned in the Supreme Court by a lawyer from the Committee.

In addition to lessons for children, the Committee also offers educational activities for grown-ups. The project for integration of migrants in Russia resumed in 2016. Despite many migrants residing in Russia there is no government program focused specifically on their integration. In fact, only non-governmental organizations are concerned with this problem and the project "Integration courses" is among the few ones in Moscow that help migrants

with learning Russian and the basics of law, as well as practical computer skills.

Within the year, the project taught 30 migrants from Afghanistan, Iran, Nigeria, Congo, Zimbabwe and other countries. Because learning Russian is most important for integration, teaching the language is the project's priority.

The participants attended classes three days a week, took training courses for conflict resolution held by a professional psychologist and were individually instructed how to work on a computer.

Moreover, during the year, Committee volunteers give Russian lessons for grown-ups individually or in small groups.

*Children learn Russian, Arabic, English and play games. The teachers say that children learn everything rather quickly and for them learning Russian is almost as easy as it is for native speakers: they do not need to learn case endings because they naturally develop an intuition to express their thoughts.*



*It is harder for grown-ups to learn a foreign language than it is for children. For adults, Russian grammar is a complicated system that needs to be memorized. But those who attend classes are interested in learning Russian because they want to integrate into Russian society and be able to communicate effectively at work in a clinic or shop. This can also explain how some migrants achieve great results quite quickly.*



# Medical aid

*Sidra Zarur lost her legs from an explosion during a bombing in Aleppo. Her mother said: "I was home, and Sidra and her older sister went outside. All of a sudden, I heard a horrible sound. I ran outside and saw people crowding. At this moment my neighbour took my hand and said: "Your daughters are there." Sidra's older sister later died in the hospital.*

In 2016, the Committee received a healthcare license. The Committee's physician gave more than 2000 consultations within the first year.

Most of those who visited the doctor received the necessary recommendations and medicine. The medicine supply was donated to the Committee by the international organizations Médecins Sans Frontières and Fair Assistance (Doctor Liza).

In addition to consultations with a physician, voluntary psychologists also provided their services in the Committee's office. In 2016, more than 100 people took advantage of the psychologists' services at least once and 23 individuals were given regular consultations.



# Humanitarian assistance

The Committee helps refugees and migrants by giving them necessities like clothes, kitchenware, strollers, and toys. The Committee collects donations for welfare and moneyed assistance. In 2016, 255 families received a grand total of 4,5 million rubles in financial assistance.

One of the rooms in the Committee office is used as storage for donations received. Those who want to help those in need bring clothing, household chemicals, household appliances and other everyday necessities.



## The Committee's Internet Presence

The Committee publishes its work on the official website ([www.refugee.ru](http://www.refugee.ru)), which is available in Russian, English, and French. CAC news can be also found on social networking services like Facebook, VK.com, Twitter, and YouTube. Journalists and potential donors, press releases, articles, notes covering migration problems, remarkable stories of migration (published with the refugees' consent), video interviews with the head of the Committee on essential topics and much more.



## Publications

In 2016, the Committee's report called "Administrative deportation from the Russian Federation: justice or massive ejection?" was published. The article was based on intensive court monitoring (the Committee employees' personal observations during court sessions) as well as data from official court sources.

Also, in 2016, the report covering the Committee's work in 2015 was published.



## Volunteers

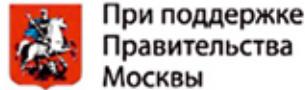
In 2016, an average of 10 volunteers were helping the Committee at any one time. Volunteers were mostly students studying at Russian and foreign universities. They accompanied refugees to the police and to the doctor when necessary. Volunteers also helped with translating CAC articles into French and English and gave integration classes for children and grown-ups who applied to the Committee for assistance.

*Ekaterina, one of volunteers, teaches Russian to girls from Afghanistan. They often celebrate birthdays and other holidays together. Ekaterina wants to show them the Red Square, but their parents still do not allow the girls to go into the centre of Moscow.*

*On the photo: one of the girls is drawing an Afghan ornament on Ekaterina's hand as a way of saying "Thank you."*



We enclose gratitude to our partners for their support



In 2016, the Committee received a total sum of 2 693 949 rubles in private donations.

On April 20, 2015, the Ministry of Justice of the Russian Federation put Civic Assistance Committee on the register of foreign agents.

Civic Assistance Committee —  
a non-profit charitable  
organization aimed at helping  
refugees and forced migrants

129110, Moscow, Olimpiysky  
Prospekt, 22

[www.refugee.ru](http://www.refugee.ru)

### **Report 2016**

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