

About imitation of the asylum institution in Russia: statistics for 2020 and its brief analysis

The Migration Affairs Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia in 2020 updated several anti-records at once, which demonstrates the extremely sad situation with the rights of refugees and the institution of asylum in Russia. It is more accurate to call it the imitation of the institution. Each year it seems to us that the situation couldn't be getting any worse, but the Russian migration services set new anti-records. Here are some **anti-records set in 2020**:

- the minimum number of people who managed to apply for recognition as a refugee in history – 239 people (the previous minimum in 2018 was 388 people);
- the minimum number of holders of refugee status (**455 people**) at the end of the year, which is 32 people less than in 2019 (at least since 2007);
- the minimum number of those who received temporary asylum (not including citizens of Ukraine) - **489 people**;
- the minimum number since 2007 (**1,472 people**) of those who at the end of 2020 had the status of temporary asylum in Russia, with the exception of Ukrainian citizens. This is 200 people (or 15%) less than at the end of 2019;
- the minimum number of Syrian citizens granted temporary asylum since the beginning of the Syrian bloodshed – 359 people;

The only general parameter (the number of applicants, the number of statuses granted, the number of those who have a status at the end of the year), where there seems to be an improvement compared to 2019, is the increase in the number of those who managed to apply for temporary asylum (excluding citizens of Ukraine). 1,720 people in 2019, 2,063 in 2020.

However, if we deep dive into the reason why this figure has risen, we will find, perhaps, **the main news** of the Russian institution of refuge in 2020. There is a spike and an unclear increase in the number of Chinese citizens who have managed to apply for temporary asylum in Russia. Starting from 2011 (the year from which the relevant statistics are kept), until last year, the maximum recorded number of Chinese who managed to apply for asylum in Russia **was seven people (2012)**. In 2020, the number suddenly skyrocketed to **901 people**. We don't know the reason behind it, because at the Civic Assistance Committee, we didn't receive any applications from Chinese citizens. That's why questions come up: Is this a mistake in statistics? Some kind of the one-time and group action? Has this something to do with the coronavirus pandemic? Or some unclear operations of the migration service? **At the same time, despite the large number of applications, by the end of 2020 only 18 Chinese citizens were granted temporary asylum.**

About situation in the world and in Russia

[According to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees](#) (UNHCR), the number of people forced to relocate in the world in 2020 increased again by **2.9 million people** compared to the previous year (in 2019 - 70.8 million people), and now it's **82.4 million people**. **26.4 million of them are refugees** (in 2019 there were 26 million), **48 million people** were displaced within the country of their citizenship (in 2019 there were 45.7 million people), **4 million people** - asylum seekers (in 2019 there were 4.2 million people). Since 2019, UNHCR has included in the statistics Venezuelans who were forced to leave their homeland, but are not classified by UNHCR as refugees and defined as a separate group of "displaced abroad".

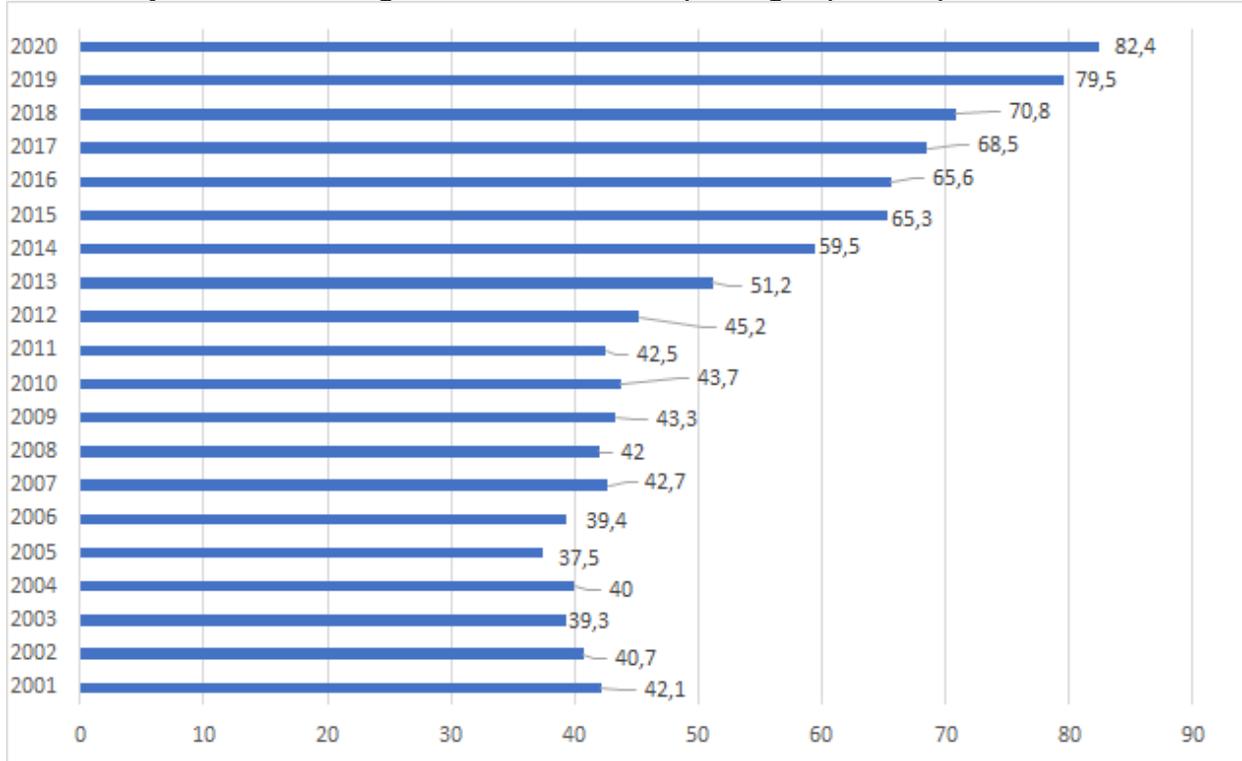


Diagram 1. Number (million people) of forcibly displaced (internally displaced persons, refugees and asylum seekers) in the world from 2001 to 2020 (according to UNHCR data)

The total number of forcibly displaced persons, as well as the number of refugees, has been growing continuously for the ninth year in a row (since 2011). There has never been before so many refugees in the world, even after the World War II.

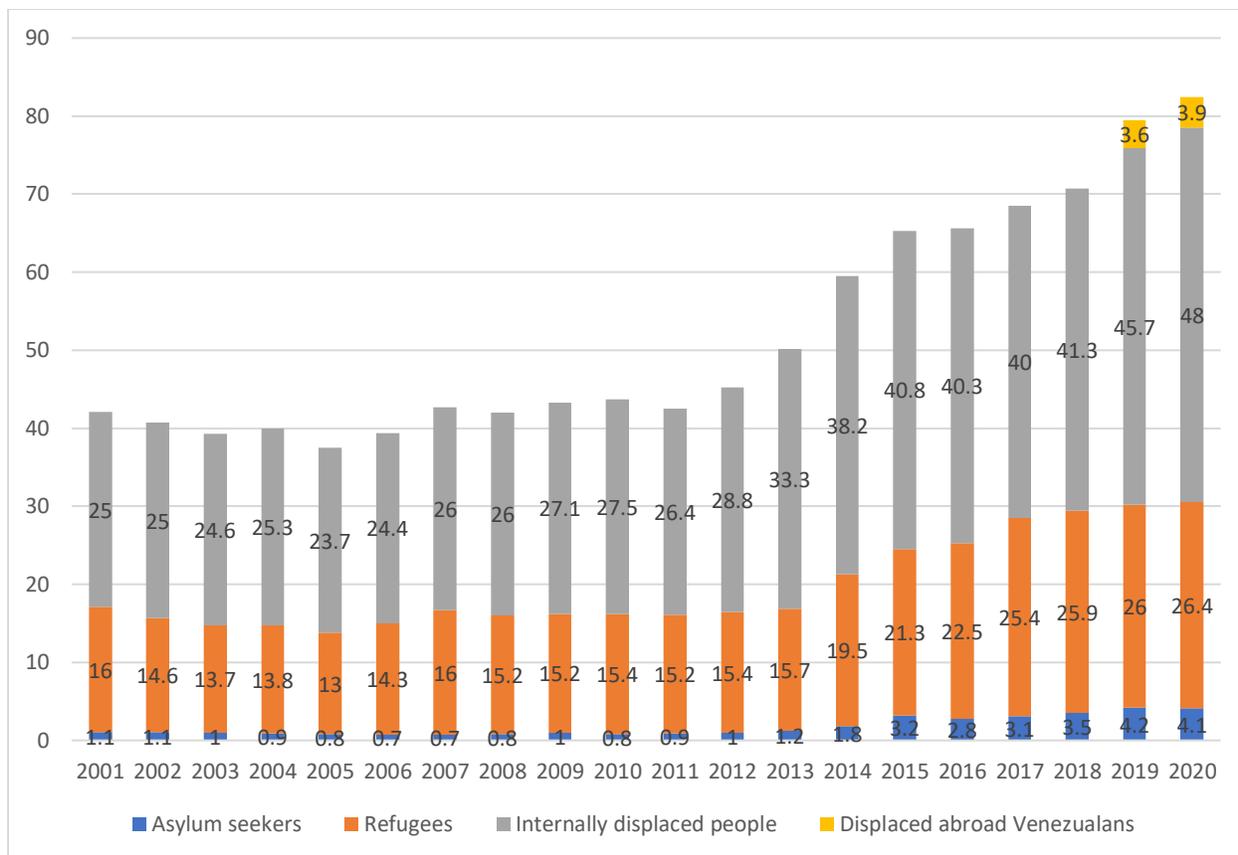


Diagram 2. Number (million people) of forcibly displaced persons, refugees and asylum seekers in the world from 2001 to 2020 (according to UNHCR data).

In Russia, the official refugee status (a person becomes a refugee not when they are recognized by the state; is how we distinguish the fact of a person's refugee status from the recognition or non-recognition of him as a refugee by the state), which is most fully correlated with the UN Convention on the Status refugees, at the end of 2020 had **only 455 people**. The number of refugees officially recognized by the Russian authorities has been continuously decreasing for six years (since 2014). The number of recognized refugees throughout the year also remains at an unacceptable and absurdly low level. In the entire year 2020, Russian officials recognized **only 28 people** as refugees.

All this does not demonstrate a functioning refugee institution, but it's imitation. Another 19,817 people had the status of temporary asylum, 93% of them (18,345 people) were citizens of Ukraine. While the number of refugees in the world has grown rapidly **over the past nine years, in Russia the number of those who had refugee or temporary asylum status, after the spike associated with the provision of temporary asylum to Ukrainian citizens, has been very rapidly decreasing over the past five years. As a result, in the largest country in terms of area, even if we take into account the status of temporary asylum, in 2020 less than 0.1% of the total number of refugees (recognized by the UNHCR) in the world had asylum.**

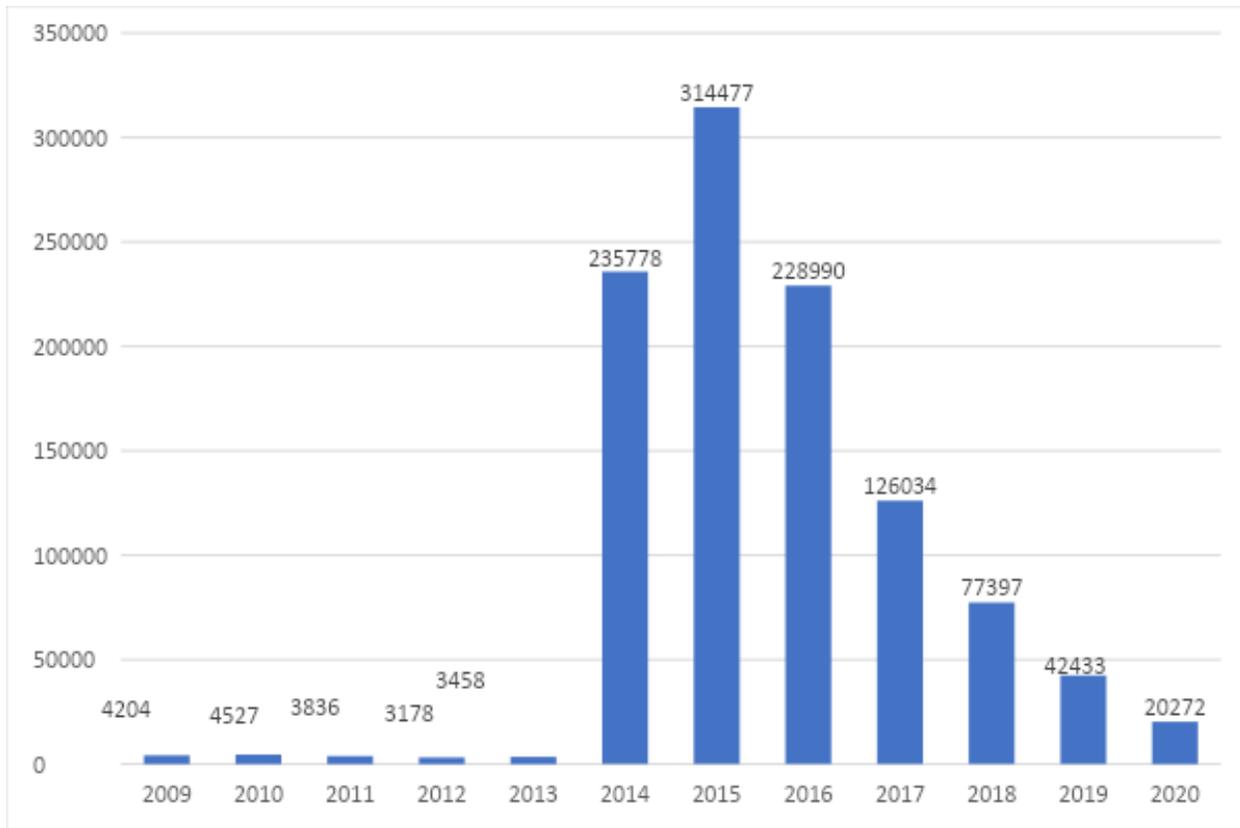


Diagram 3. The number of persons who had refugee or temporary asylum status in the Russian Federation at the end of the year or the beginning of the next one over the last 12 years (according to the data of the Federal Migration Service of Russia and the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation)

In 2020 the Civic Assistance Committee had repeatedly written about how refugees live, and how badly the institution of asylum in Russia works. For example, in May we sent a [report to the UN Human Rights Committee on how the Russian authorities are violating the principle of non-refoulement of refugees](#), where we talked about a whole range of problems and dangers faced by many refugees in Russia: from problems with access to the asylum procedure and imperfection of legislation, to the violation of the principle of non-refoulement.

In September, together with Professor Munyang Lee from Seoul National University, we released the report [“The One Recognized Refugee in Nine Years. Review of the situation with refugees from the DPRK \(North Korea\) in Russia”](#), where we talked about both some very tragic fates of those who fled from the DPRK to Russia, and the general situation with North Korean refugees.

The situation of the institution of asylum in Russia was most fully described in the report [“Russia as a country of asylum”](#) published by the Committee “Civic Assistance” in 2015. Despite the fact that six years have passed since the publication of the report, and the Federal Migration Service of Russia is no longer exist, and its powers were withdrawn by the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation, the main reasons for violations of refugee rights in 2020 remained the same as for many previous years, and the situation became even worse.

The political attitude remains the main reason for the tragic situation with the rights of refugees in Russia. On personal instructions from the upper echelons of power with the support of the state federal media, the Russian migration services are able to provide shelter to large groups of refugees, as was the case in 2014 for citizens from two eastern regions of Ukraine. But when there is no such directive, the migration services are reluctant to grant asylum, following an unspoken policy of refusal. The state media keep silent about the situation related to the collapse of the institution of asylum in Russia.

Listed below is statistical data available on the situation with the asylum institution in Russia for 2020. It should be noted that the statistics published by the federal state, which had already been limited before, became even less detailed in 2016 after the abolition of the FMS of Russia and the transfer of its functions to the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation. The situation has not improved since then. Thus, [in the section of the Main Directorate for Migration Issues of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation](#) on the website, there is no statistical information about refugees at all. Certain indicators of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation concerning refugees are published by the Federal State Statistics Service, and the data that the Federal Migration Service of Russia previously opened and published on the public domain, is now available only to certain organizations on special requests sent to the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation.

It makes sense to be reminded that foreign citizens seeking asylum in Russia can try to obtain only two statuses:

1. Refugee status, which correlates with the Convention on the Status of Refugees (with a few important clauses, which were analyzed in detail in the report “[Russia as a country of asylum](#)”).
2. Temporary asylum status, which is granted, according to the law, “[if there are grounds for recognizing a person as a refugee based on the results of checking the information about this person and his family members who arrived with him, including the circumstances of arrival in the territory of the Russian Federation or the existence of humane reasons requiring temporary stay of this person on the territory of the Russian Federation](#)”.

On paper there is also a special status of **political asylum**, which is based on the Order of the President of the Russian Federation of July 21, 1997 No. 746. Moreover, on paper, this status sometimes shows signs of life, which was reflected in the [changes made in it in 2012](#). The only problem is, that according to the Civic Assistance Committee, since the signing of this order 23 years ago, this status has not been granted to anyone.

If we deduce the first 15 countries of origin by the number of citizens who had asylum (refugee status or temporary asylum status) in Russia at the end of 2020, we get the picture presented in Table 1.

№	Country of origin	Total number of people who had any asylum status in Russia by 31 December 2021	
		People	% of the total number of those who had received asylum

1	Ukraine	18428	91
2	Afghanistan	770	3,8
3	Syria	361	1,8
4	Georgia	142	0,7
5	Yemen	88	0,4
6	Uzbekistan	75	0,4
7	DPRK	53	0,3
8	Tajikistan	42	0,2
9 & 10	Kyrgyzstan	29	0,1
9 & 10	Moldova	29	0,1
11	Turkmenistan	24	0,1
12	Azerbaijan	20	0,1
13	China	19	0,1
14	Iraq	16	0,1
15	Germany	15	0,1

Table 1. The first 15 countries of origin, distributed by the number of citizens who had asylum in Russia at the end of 2020 (according to the data of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation)

Despite the sad state of the institution of asylum in 2019, described in our report "[Degradation of the institution of asylum in Russia and new anti-records of migration services: statistics for 2017 and its brief analysis](#)", the situation in 2020 had not changed significantly, and worsened in a number of parameters. At the end of 2020, there were only 455 holders of official refugee status in the country. The number of temporary asylum holders has also declined significantly.

	<i>Had a refugee status</i>		<i>Had a status of temporary asylum</i>		<i>Had a shelter in total</i>	
	December 31, 2020	December 31, 2019	December 31, 2020	December 31, 2019	December 31, 2020	December 31, 2019
Total	455	487	19817	41946	20272	42433
Azerbaijan	8	7	12	11	20	18
Afghanistan	256	252	514	543	770	795
Germany	2	-	13	11	15	11
Georgia	23	27	119	120	142	147
Iraq	6	6	10	11	16	17
Yemen	-	-	88	97	88	97
China	1	-	18	2	19	2
Kyrgyzstan	1	3	28	29	29	32
DPRK	1	1	52	49	53	50

Moldova	16	16	13	14	29	30
Syria	2	2	359	591	361	593
Tajikistan	6	6	36	34	42	40
Turkmenistan	-	-	24	12	24	12
Uzbekistan	16	17	59	44	75	61
Ukraine	83	119	18345	40274	18428	40393
other countries and stateless persons	34	29	127	104	161	135

Table 2. Separation of refugees and persons granted temporary asylum by country of origin (According to the data of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation).

Refugee status in 2020

Since the late 1990s, the number of persons with official refugee status in Russia has decreased hundreds of times, falling from 240,000 at the end of 1997 to 455 at the end of 2020 (527 times drop). Since 2008, the number of holders of refugee status in Russia has fluctuated between 600 and 800. But in 2016, the value went beyond these boundaries, amounting to 598 people, in 2017 - 592 people, in 2018 - 572 people, and in 2019 already less than five hundred - 487 people, and **in 2020 - 455 people, and less was only at the end of 2006.**

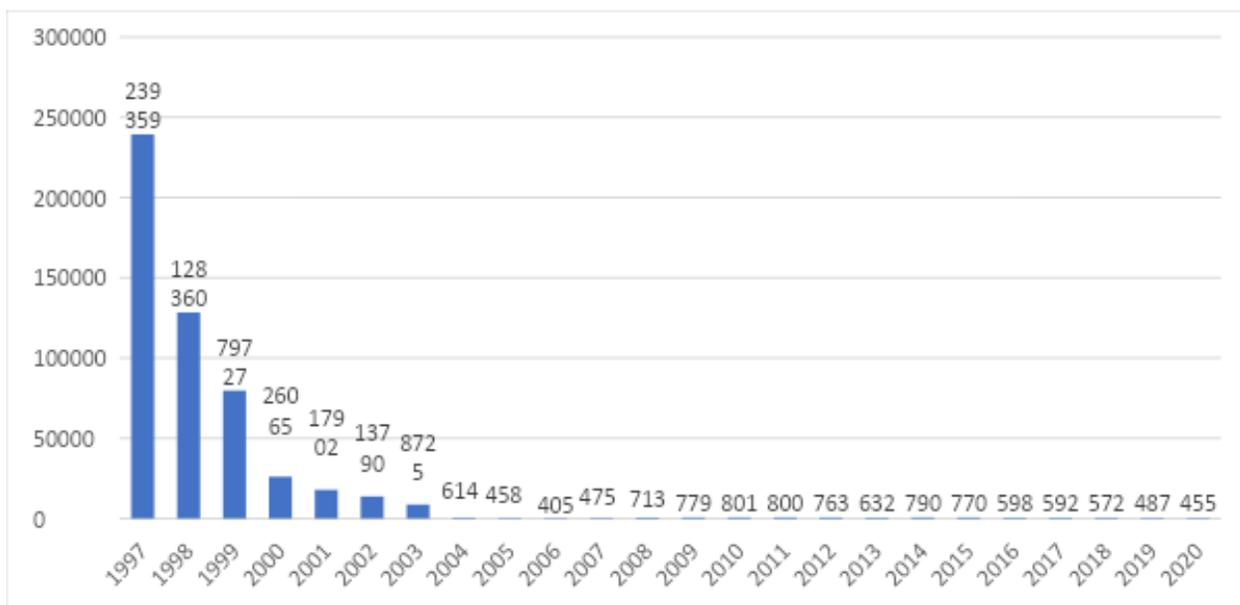


Diagram 4. The number of persons who had refugee status in the Russian Federation at the end of the year or the beginning of the next 1997-2020. (according to the data of the Federal Migration Service of Russia and the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation)

At the end of 2020, 80% of all holders of refugee status came from three countries: Afghanistan (256 people), Ukraine (83 people) and Georgia (23 people). In total, citizens of 26 countries and two other stateless persons held refugee status.

№	Country of origin	Number of people	% of the total number of refugees
1	Afghanistan	256	56.3
2	Ukraine	83	18.2
3	Georgia	23	5.1
4 & 5	Uzbekistan	16	3.5
4 & 5	Moldova	16	3.5
6	Azerbaijan	8	1.8
7, 8 & 9	Iraq	6	1.3
7, 8 & 9	Lebanon	6	1.3
7, 8 & 9	Tajikistan	6	1.3
10 & 11	Armenia	4	0.9
10 & 11	Bangladesh	4	0.9
from 12 to 19	Iran	3	0.7
from 12 to 19	Germany	2	0.4
from 12 to 19	Kazakhstan	2	0.4
from 12 to 19	Latvia	2	0.4
from 12 to 19	Lithuania	2	0.4
from 12 to 19	Palestine	2	0.4
from 12 to 19	Syria	2	0.4
from 12 to 19	USA	2	0.4
from 20 to 26	Belarus	1	0.2
from 20 to 26	Bosnia and Herzegovina	1	0.2
from 20 to 26	Egypt	1	0.2
from 20 to 26	China	1	0.2
from 20 to 26	DPRK	1	0.2
from 20 to 26	Lebanon	1	0.2
from 20 to 26	Turkey	1	0.2
	Stateless persons	2	0.4

Table 3. Distribution of those who had refugee status by country of origin at the end of 2020 (According to the data of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation)

During 2020, only 239 people were able to apply for recognition as a refugee in Russia, which is 158 people less than in 2019 (397 people). This is the minimum number for the entire time for which we have these statistics (since 2009). The reason was both the limited reception due to the pandemic and the continuing policy of the Migration Directorate of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation not to consider applications for recognition as a refugee. This was implemented with the various illegal actions: from the inaccessibility of information on how to submit documents to refusal to accept them. Another technique is that the official, without listening to the applicant, in the questionnaire marks the submission of application for temporary asylum, and not an application for refugee status.

Of the few who managed to overcome various barriers, only 28 people received refugee status. Fewer refugee certificates were issued only in 2019.

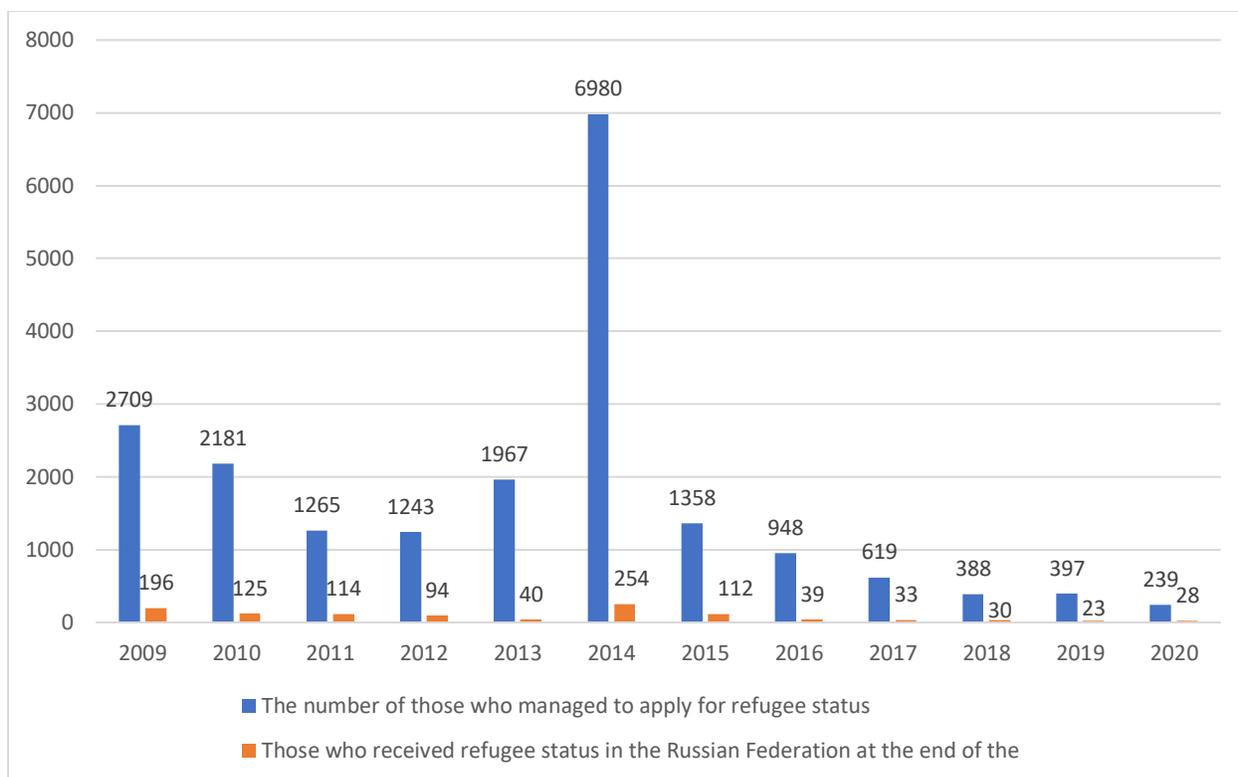


Diagram 5. The number of those who managed to apply for refugee status, as well as those who received refugee status in the Russian Federation at the end of the year from 2009 to 2020. (according to the data of the Federal Migration Service of Russia and the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation)

At the same time, according to the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation, at the end of 2020, in more than 55 constituent entities of the Russian Federation, NOT a SINGLE refugee was registered with the state migration service. So, for example, in the entire large Ural Federal District (six regions), only one refugee was registered with the migration service, in the huge Far Eastern Federal District (nine regions) there were only two people with refugee status, and in the giant Siberian Federal District (12 regions) - not a single refugee. This is in particular due to the fact that the authorities do not create any conditions for the integration of refugees; that's why those who seek asylum prefer to do this in the central regions and, above all, in Moscow, where they can find work, contacts, and charitable organizations which are able to provide legal, humanitarian and medical assistance.

Temporary asylum in 2020

Temporary asylum status in Russia is a “light” version of refugee status. In the case of temporary asylum, the state relieves itself of a significant share of responsibility and social guarantees, but, probably, the main feature is that this status is granted for no more than a period of one year (often less). At the same time, no later than 30 days before the expiration of the certificate of temporary asylum, the person must again apply to the migration service for an extension of the status, which is a complex procedure similar to filing it for the first time. In other words, a person needs to prove again why they cannot return to their country of origin. It is a common practice of the Russian migration service to refuse to renew the status of temporary asylum without any valid reason. The

status itself, in fact, simply allows for some time to legally work and stay on the territory of Russia, without offering any serious social and adaptation assistance from the state.

In 2020, the number of temporary asylum holders in Russia continued to decline dramatically. At the end of 2020, **19,817 people** were registered with the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation with the status of temporary asylum. At the same time, 18,345 people of them (93%) were citizens of only one country - Ukraine. The decrease in the total number of those who have the status of temporary asylum was mainly due to the citizens of Ukraine, who were actively issued Russian passports in 2020 (see below), but, unfortunately, this is not the only reason.

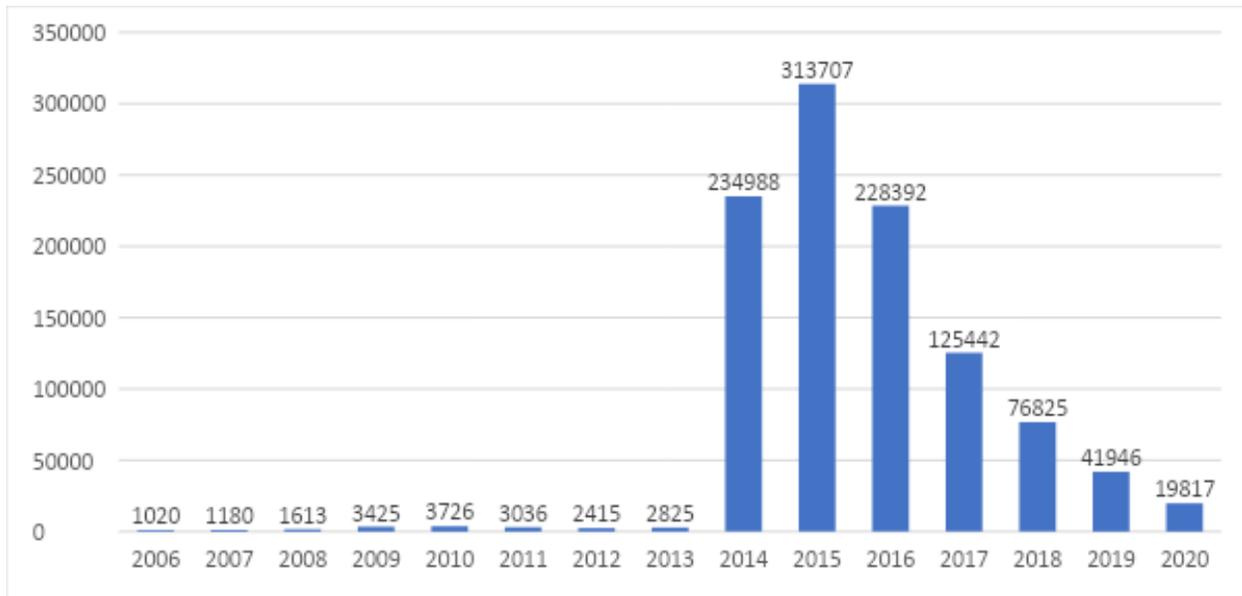


Diagram 6. The number of persons who had the status of temporary asylum in the Russian Federation at the end of the year or the beginning of the next from 2006 to 2020. (according to the data of the Federal Migration Service of Russia and the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation)

But if we do not take into account the data on the citizens of Ukraine, it turns out that at the end of 2020 the number of temporary asylum holders decreased again (for the sixth year in a row!) and became **1,472 people**. This number is an **anti-record since 2007**.

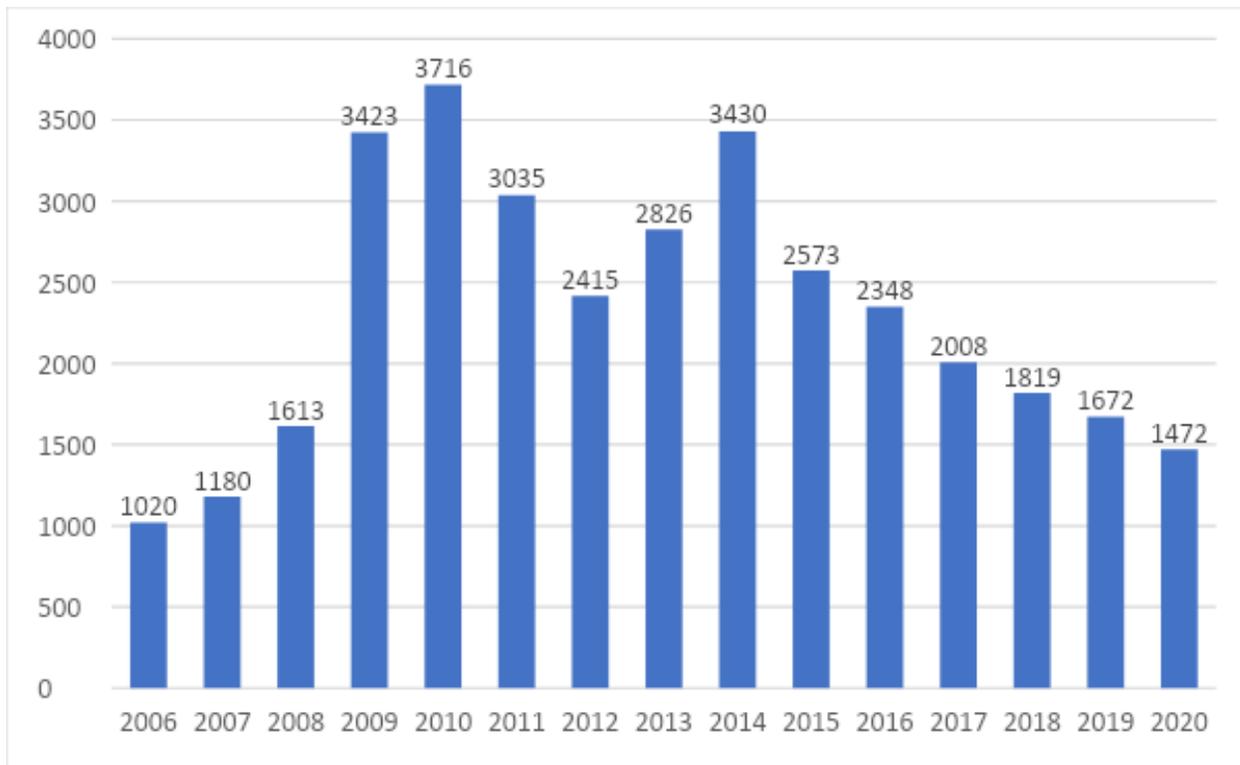


Diagram 7. The number of persons who had the status of temporary asylum in the Russian Federation at the end of the year from 2006 to 2020, excluding data on citizens of Ukraine (according to statistics from the Federal Migration Service of Russia and the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation)

In this data (1,472 people) 67% belonged to immigrants from three countries: Afghanistan (514 people), Syria (359 people) and Georgia (119 people).

If we consider the statistics for both statuses, then the first three places in the number of holders of refugee and temporary asylum status in Russia at the end of 2020 were occupied by immigrants from Ukraine (18,428 people), Afghanistan (770 people), Syria (361 people). Thus, immigrants from these three countries (19,559 people) - are 96.5% of all (20,272 people) who were fortunate enough to have refugee status or temporary asylum in Russia at the end of 2020.

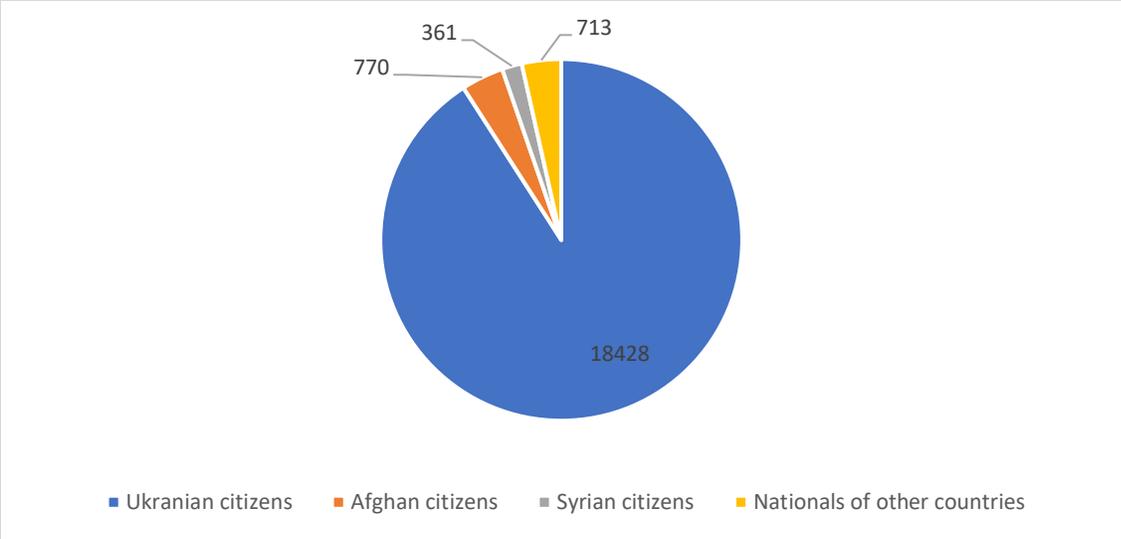


Diagram 8. The number of persons who had refugee or temporary asylum status and were registered with the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia at the end of 2020 (according to the data of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation)

Let’s take a look at the statistics on refugees from Ukraine, Syria and Afghanistan separately.

Refugees from Ukraine in Russia

Based on the statistics of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation, the number of Ukrainian citizens staying in Russia over the last year, if we compare the indicators for December 1, 2019 and December 1, 2020, decreased by 40% and amounted to 1.37 million people.

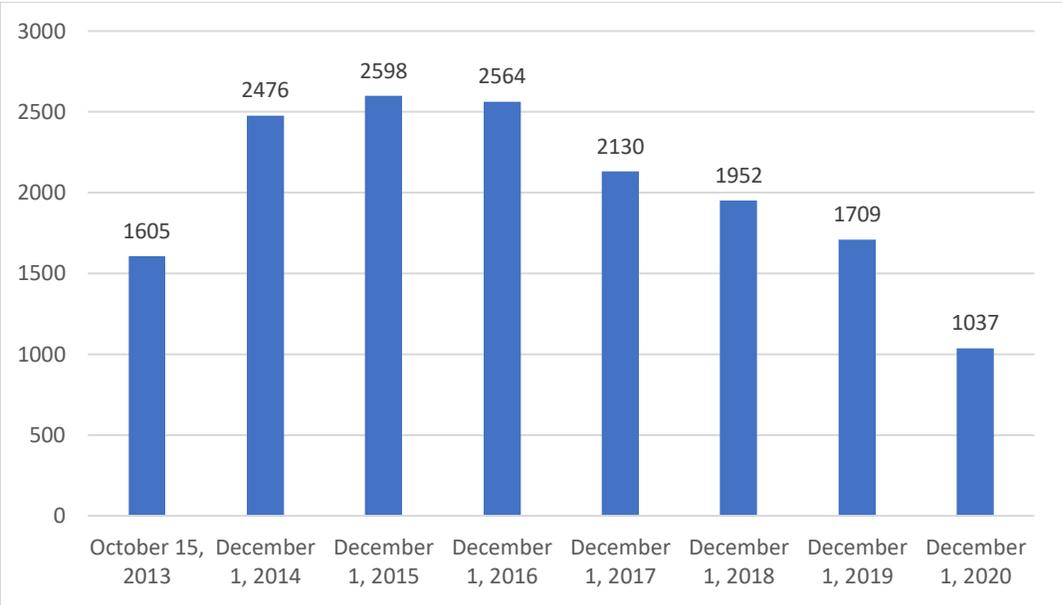


Diagram 9. The number of citizens of Ukraine staying on the territory of the Russian Federation (thousand people) as of the specified date (according to the data of the Federal Migration Service of Russia and the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation)

The migration services (first the FMS of Russia, and then the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation) had clear instruction from the top of the Russian government to grant temporary asylum to Ukrainian citizens from the Luhansk and Donetsk regions, but there was no order like this with regard to refugee status, so very few received it. In 2014, the migration services probably did not yet have precise instructions, so they allowed a large number of Ukrainian citizens to apply for refugee status, however, only 4% of those who applied for it were granted it. In 2015, officials almost did not admit applicants from Ukraine to the refugee recognition procedure, as a result of which the number of applications fell 20 times and since then has been steadily falling so that in 2020 only ten Ukrainians received this status.

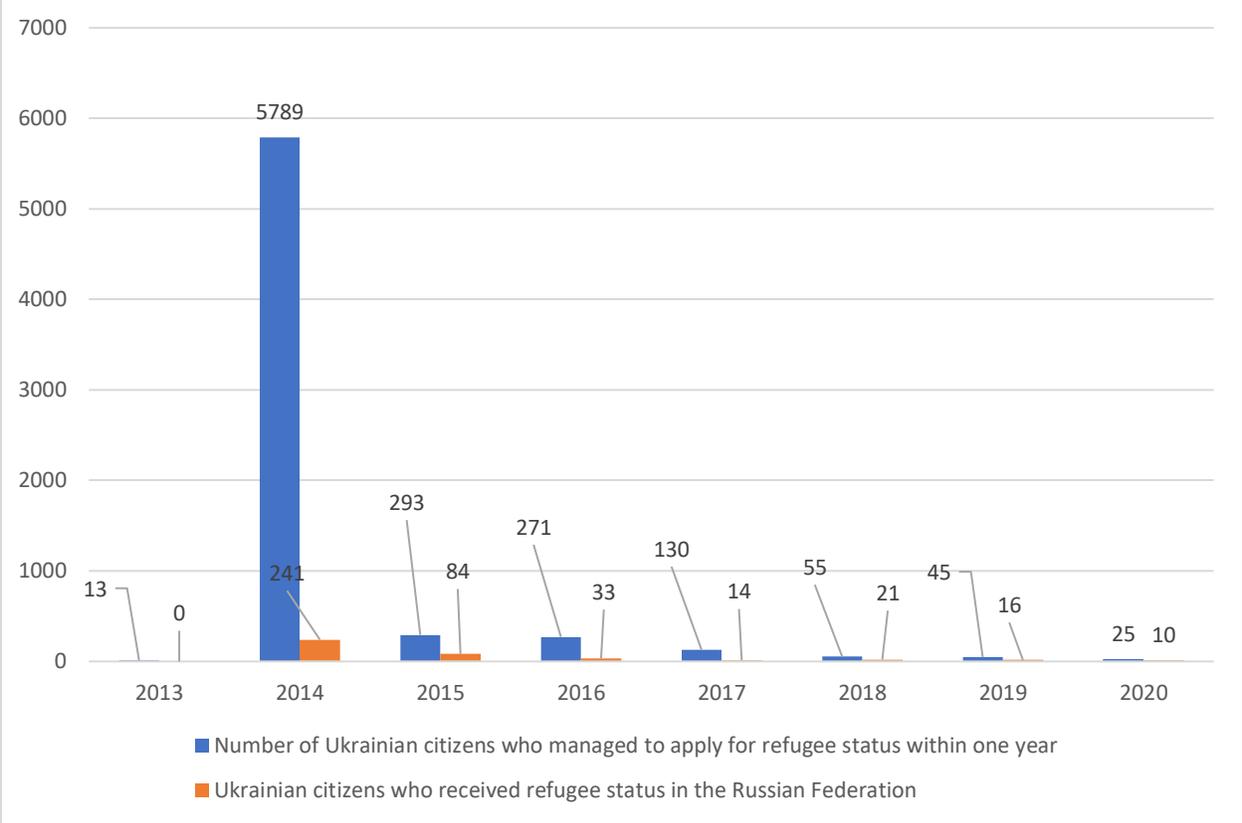


Diagram 10. Number of Ukrainian citizens who managed to apply for refugee status, as well as Ukrainian citizens who received refugee status in the Russian Federation at the end of the year from 2013 to 2020, (according to the data of the Federal Migration Service of Russia and the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation)

Considering the small number of applications approved by the migration services, it is not surprising that the number of Ukrainian citizens who would have had refugee status in Russia for the past five years has not exceeded three hundred people and has been steadily decreasing since 2015, reaching the number of 83 people at the end of 2020.

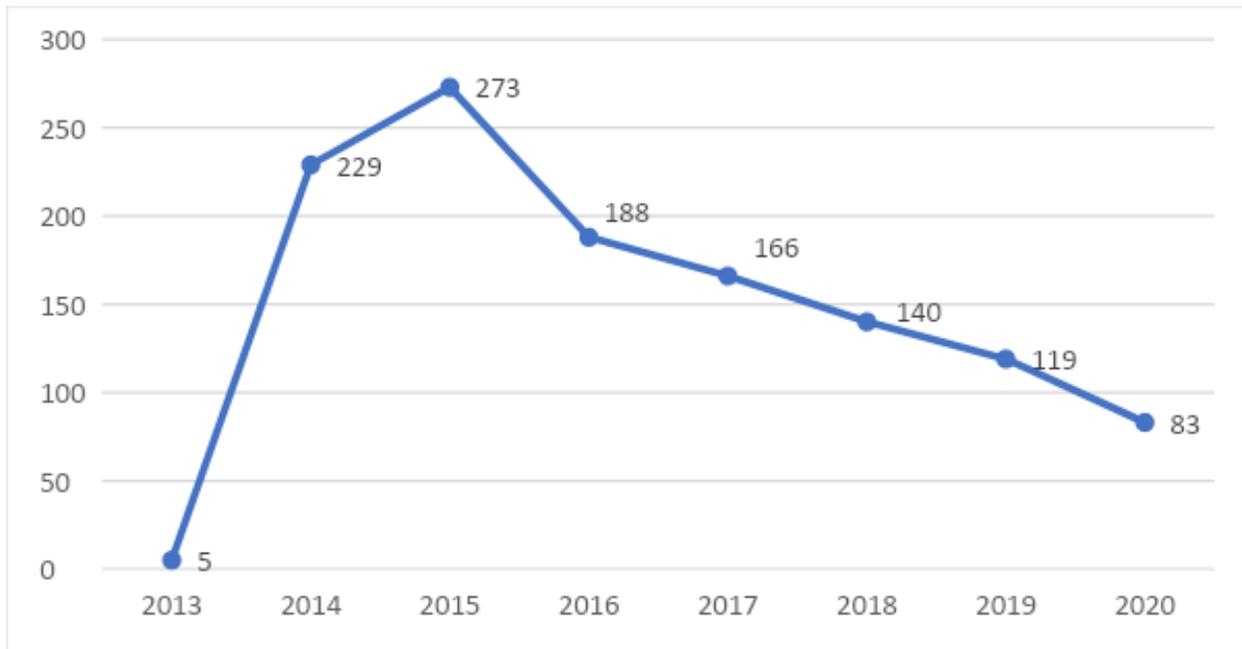


Diagram 11. The number of Ukrainian citizens who had refugee status in the Russian Federation at the end of the year from 2013 to 2020. (according to statistics from the Federal Migration Service of Russia and the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation)

In the case of granting the status of temporary asylum to the citizens of Ukraine, the migration services issue the status to almost everyone admitted to the procedure. Moreover, in 2020, the Russian Migration Service issued more certificates of temporary asylum than were requested. This is due to the fact that the processing time for an applications for temporary asylum takes about three months, so some of the certificates were issued to those Ukrainians who applied back in 2019, and therefore it did not get into the statistics for 2020.

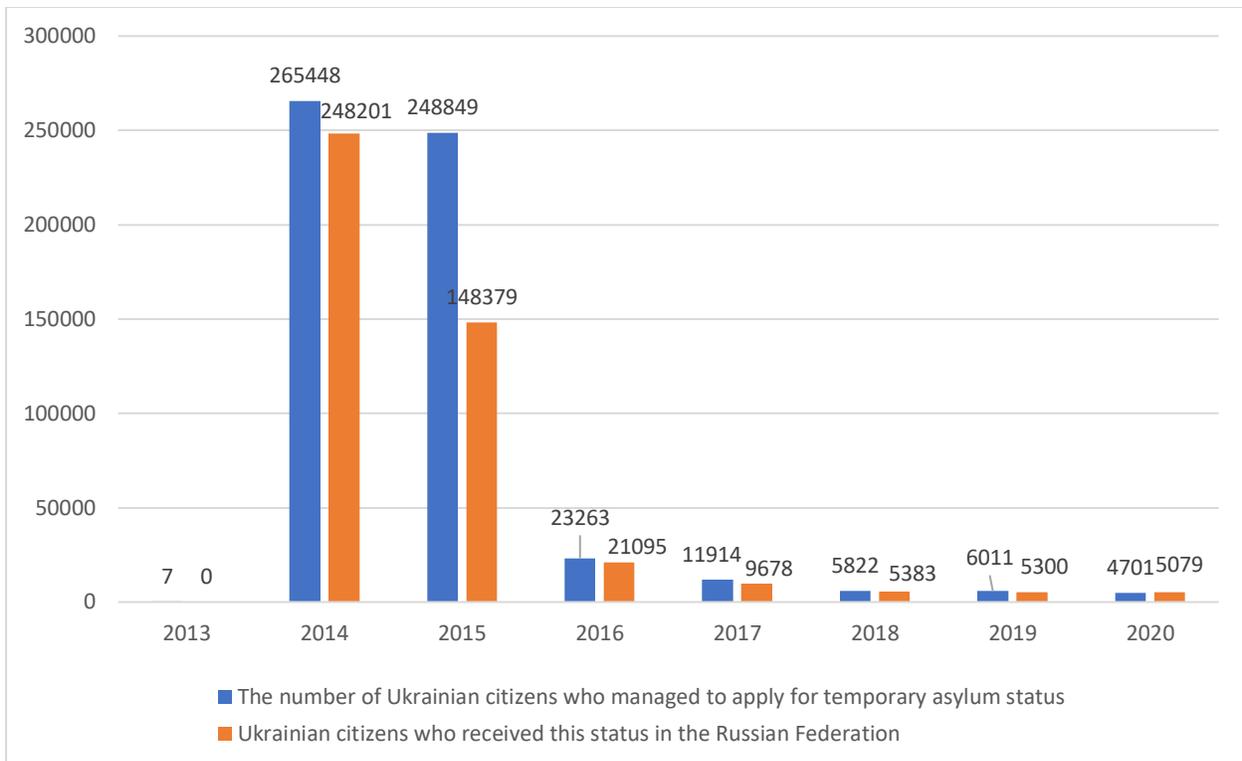


Diagram 12. The number of Ukrainian citizens who managed to apply for temporary asylum status, as well as Ukrainian citizens who received this status in the Russian Federation at the end of the year from 2013 to 2020. (according to the data of the Federal Migration Service of Russia and the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation)

The number of Ukrainian citizens with temporary asylum status continued to decline rapidly in 2019, almost half less than compared to 2018, and almost 8 times less than at the peak in 2015.

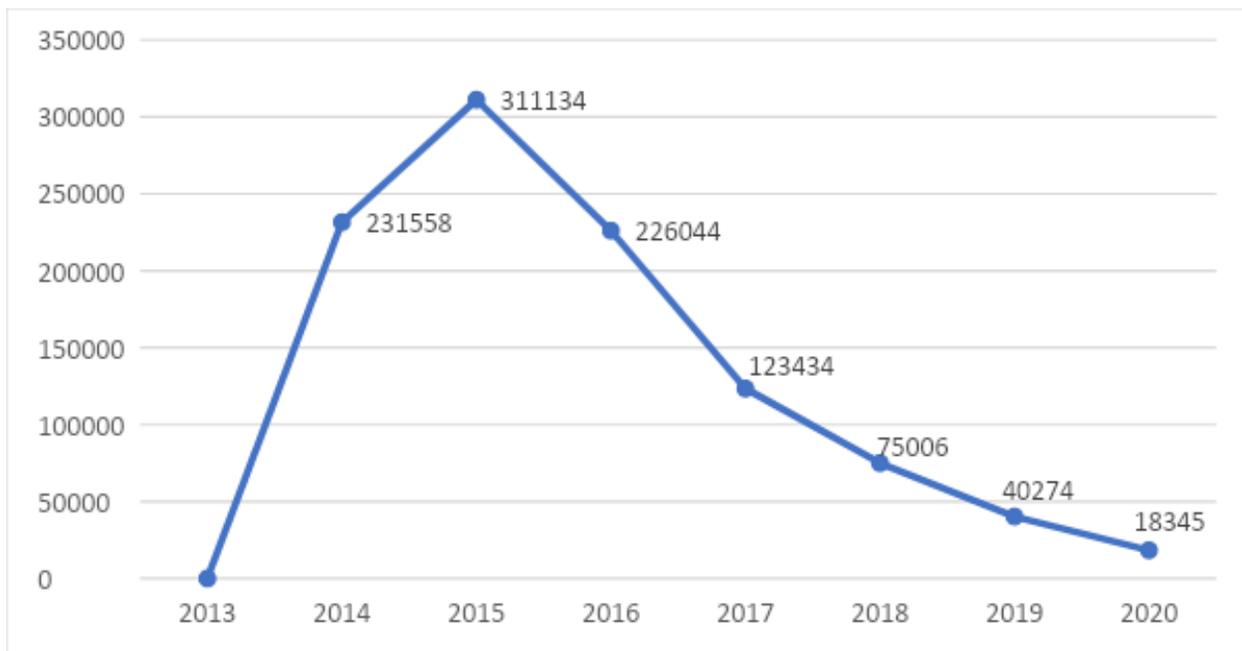


Diagram 13. The number of Ukrainian citizens who had the status of temporary asylum in the Russian Federation at the end of the year from 2013 to 2020. (according to statistics from the Federal Migration Service of Russia and the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation)

Like in the case with the massive granting of temporary asylum to Ukrainian citizens in mid-2019, Russian authorities simplified the law on Russian citizenship for Ukrainians. In addition, the authorities of the Rostov region, on behalf of the federal authorities, significantly facilitated the procedure for obtaining Russian passports for those Ukrainians who live in a part of the territory of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions of Ukraine, which is outside the control of the Ukrainian authorities. All this led to a spike in the issuance of Russian passports to Ukrainians in the second half of 2019. The high rate continued in 2020, so that during the year 409,549 people from Ukraine received Russian citizenship, which is 5 times more than in 2018. If we evaluate the statistics from 2014 to 2020, not taking into account the mass issuance of Russian passports in Crimea, then about 1 million 70 thousand citizens of Ukraine received Russian citizenship during this period.

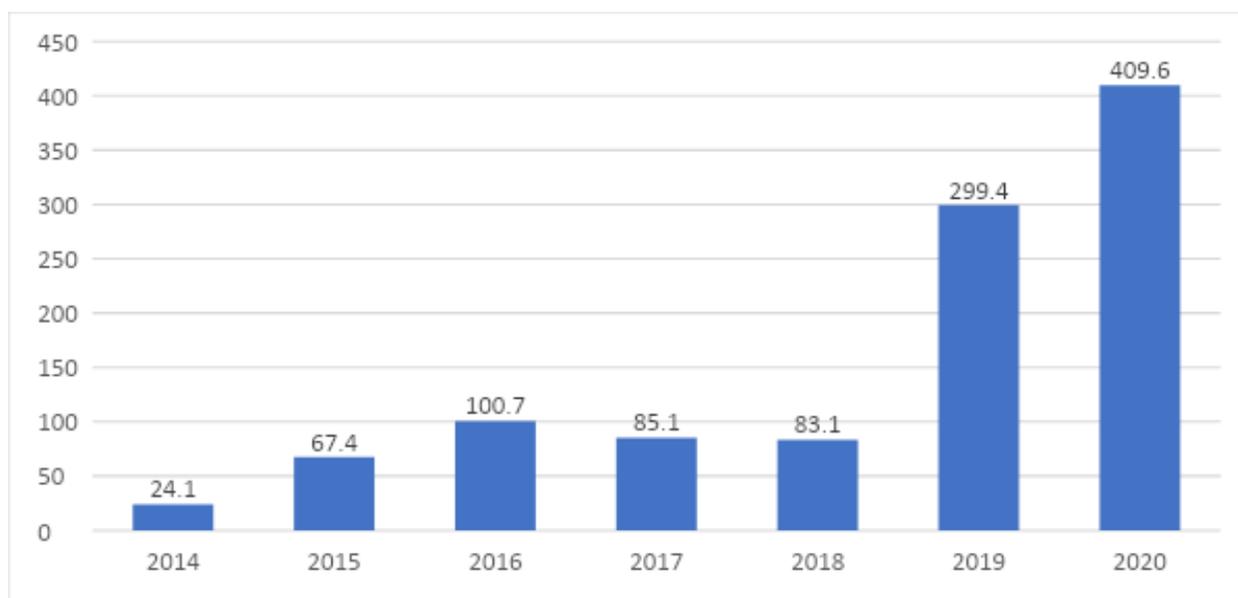


Diagram 14. The number of Ukrainian citizens (thousand people) who received Russian citizenship, not counting the mass issuance of passports in Crimea (according to statistics from the FMS of Russia and the Main Directorate of Internal Affairs of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation for 2014-2020)

Refugees from Syria in Russia

[According to the UNHCR](#), at the end of 2020 there were **6.7 million refugees** from Syria in the world, which is 100 thousand more than in 2019. In Russia, at the end of the same year, only two Syrian citizens had refugee status, another 359 Syrians had temporary asylum status. At the same time, the number of temporary asylum holders from Syria has been steadily decreasing since 2016.

According to the FMS of Russia and the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation, the number of Syrian citizens staying in Russia from 2012 to 2018 fluctuated from 8 to 10 thousand people. At the end of 2019, the number began to grow and at the end of the year

reached 10.7 thousand people. At the end of 2020, the figure returned to its previous range. Many of these people are refugees.

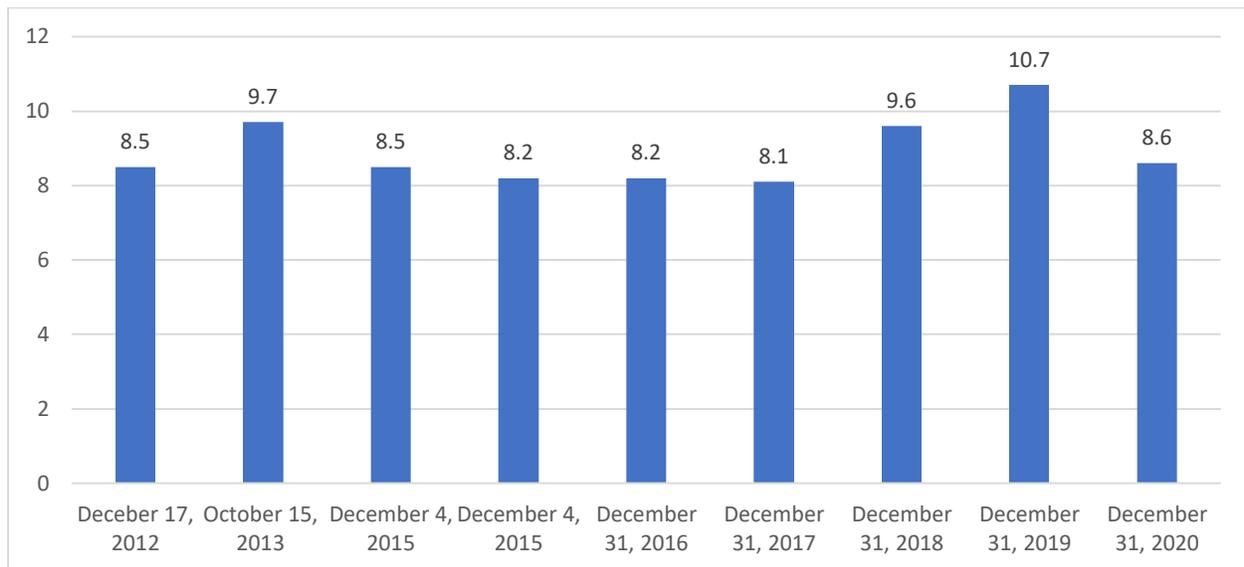


Diagram 15. Number of Syrian citizens (thousand people) staying on the territory of the Russian Federation on the specified date (according to the data of the Federal Migration Service of Russia and the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation)

During the military conflict that began in 2011, Russian migration services have refused to recognize Syrian citizens who made it to Russia as refugees. **Out of the 2,655 applications** for recognition as a refugee, which, despite numerous obstacles from officials, the Syrians have been able to file since that time, the migration services have satisfied only one, and this happened back in 2012. Another refugee from Syria was registered before the start of the bloody conflict in the country. **As a result, over the past 7 years, only TWO Syrian refugees have been registered with the Russian migration services.** The number of Syrian citizens' applications for refugee status in Russia has been steadily decreasing since 2013, as people realized that it was useless.

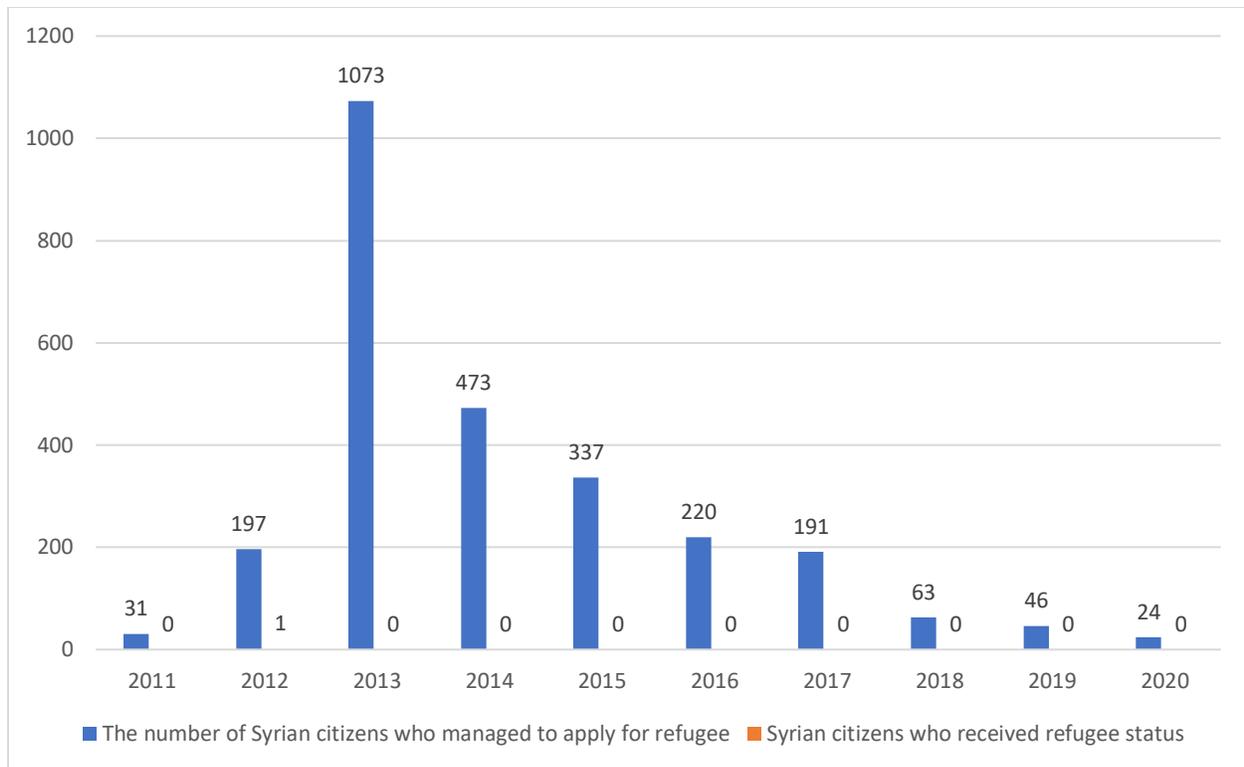


Chart 16. The number of Syrian citizens who managed to apply for refugee status, as well as Syrian citizens who received refugee status in the Russian Federation at the end of the year from 2013 to 2020. (according to the data of the FMS of Russia and the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation)

Since 2016, when the top of the Russian government decided to send an army to the already long-suffering Syria, the attitude of the migration services towards Syrian refugees in Russia has deteriorated even more. The number of Syrian citizens with temporary asylum status has been steadily and rapidly declining over the past five years and has reached its lowest level since 2012, dropping below one thousand in 2018, and reaching 359 at the end of 2020. In 2020, the Russian migration services reduced the granting of temporary asylum status to new applicants, and also almost stopped extending temporary asylum to those who had it.

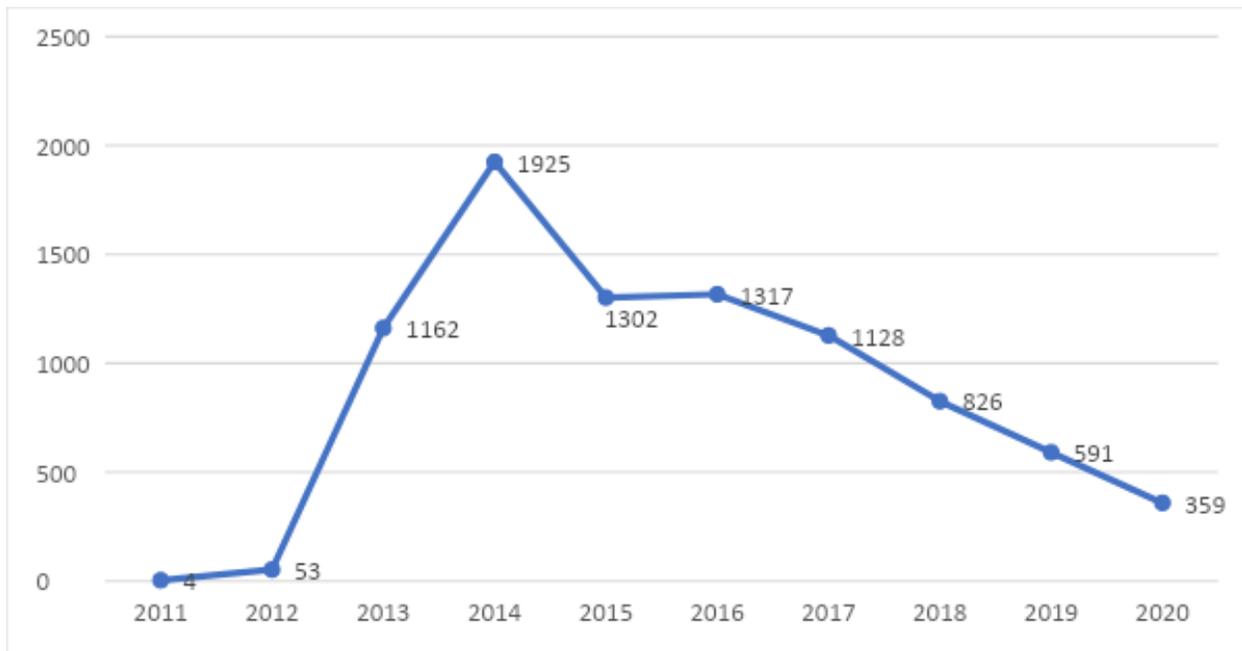


Diagram 17. The number of Syrian citizens who had the status of temporary asylum in the Russian Federation at the end of the year from 2011 to 2020. (according to statistics from the Federal Migration Service of Russia and the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation)

Since the same 2016, not only has it become even more difficult for Syrian citizens to apply for temporary asylum, but also to obtain the coveted status. So, if in 2013 67.1% of those who applied for temporary asylum received it, in 2014 - 95.4%, then in 2015 it was already only 61.8%, in 2016 - 51.9%, in 2017 - 51.2%, in 2018 - 53.9%, in 2019 - 44%, **in 2020 only 26%** (approximate figures, since this year the migration services are considering some of the applications filed last year). At the same time, the number of applications filed was the absolute minimum over the past eight years.

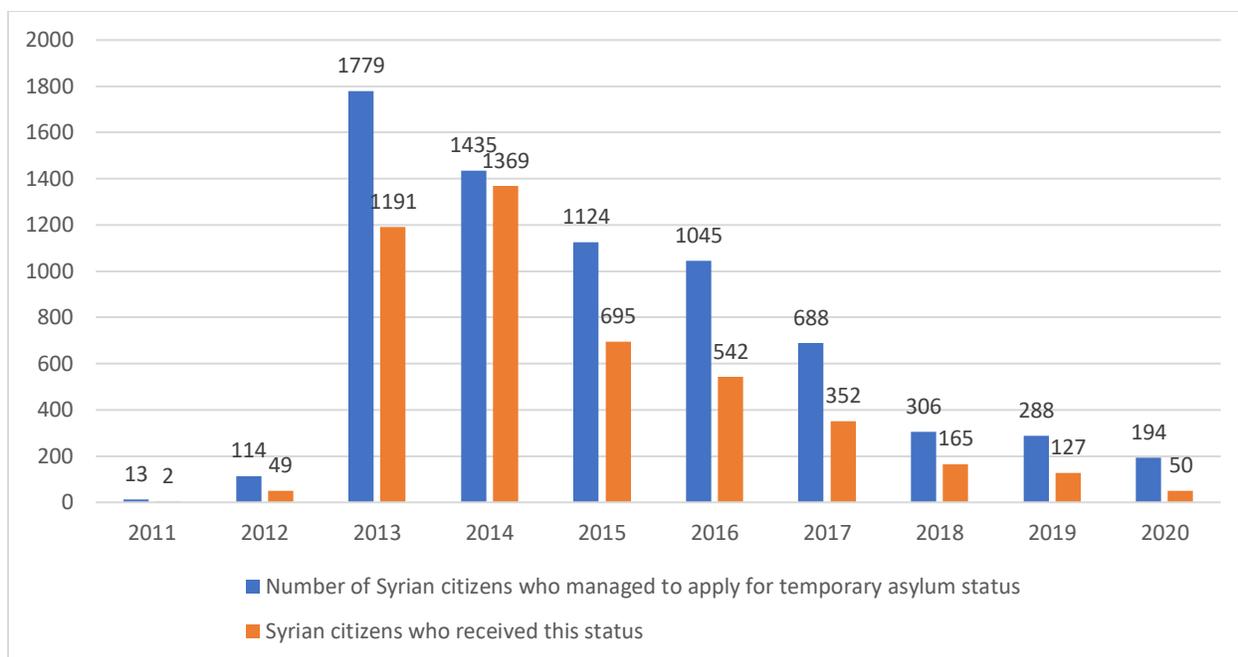


Diagram 18. Number of Syrian citizens who managed to apply for temporary asylum status, as well as Syrian citizens who received this status in the Russian Federation at the end of the year from 2011 to 2020. (according to the data of the FMS of Russia and the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation)

Please note, that compared to 2019, the number of those Syrian citizens who were accepted into Russian citizenship by the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation in 2020 has increased. If in 2019 there were 527 of them, then in 2020 there were 810 people.

Refugees from Afghanistan in Russia

According to the UNHCR, at the end of 2020 there were 2.6 million refugees from Afghanistan in the world (100,000 less than in 2019). In Russia, at the end of the same year, only 256 Afghan citizens had refugee status and another 514 had temporary asylum status. The number of refugees recognized by Russia, as well as holders of temporary asylum from Afghanistan, has more than halved since 2011.

According to the FMS of Russia and the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation, the number of Afghan citizens staying in Russia from 2012 to 2018 was about 8-10 thousand people. By the end of 2019, this number approached 11 thousand people, but at the end of 2020 it returned to this range. Many of these people are refugees.

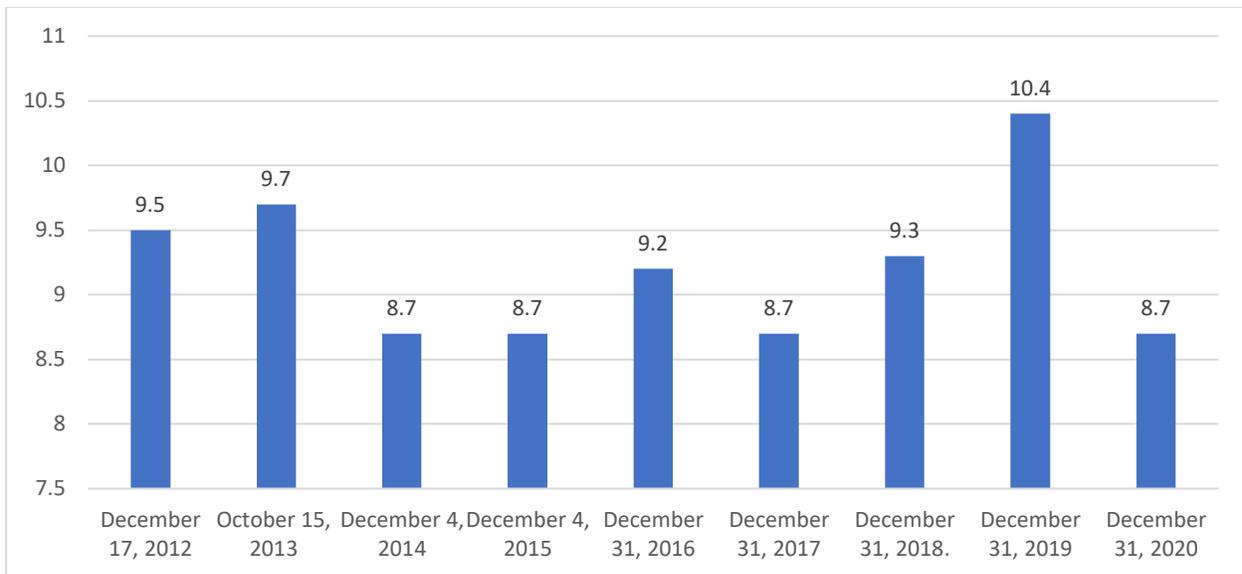


Diagram 19. Number of Afghan citizens (thousand people) staying on the territory of the Russian Federation on the specified date (according to the data of the Federal Migration Service of Russia and the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation)

A bloody conflict has been going on in Afghanistan for several decades. This country is still one of the most dysfunctional and dangerous. Despite this, over the past eight years, the number of Afghan citizens with refugee status in Russia has dropped significantly, falling from 583 at the end of 2011 to 292 in 2016, then there was a slight increase and again a drop to 252 in 2019 year. In 2020, the number of refugees from Afghanistan officially recognized by the Russian authorities increased slightly, but only by four.

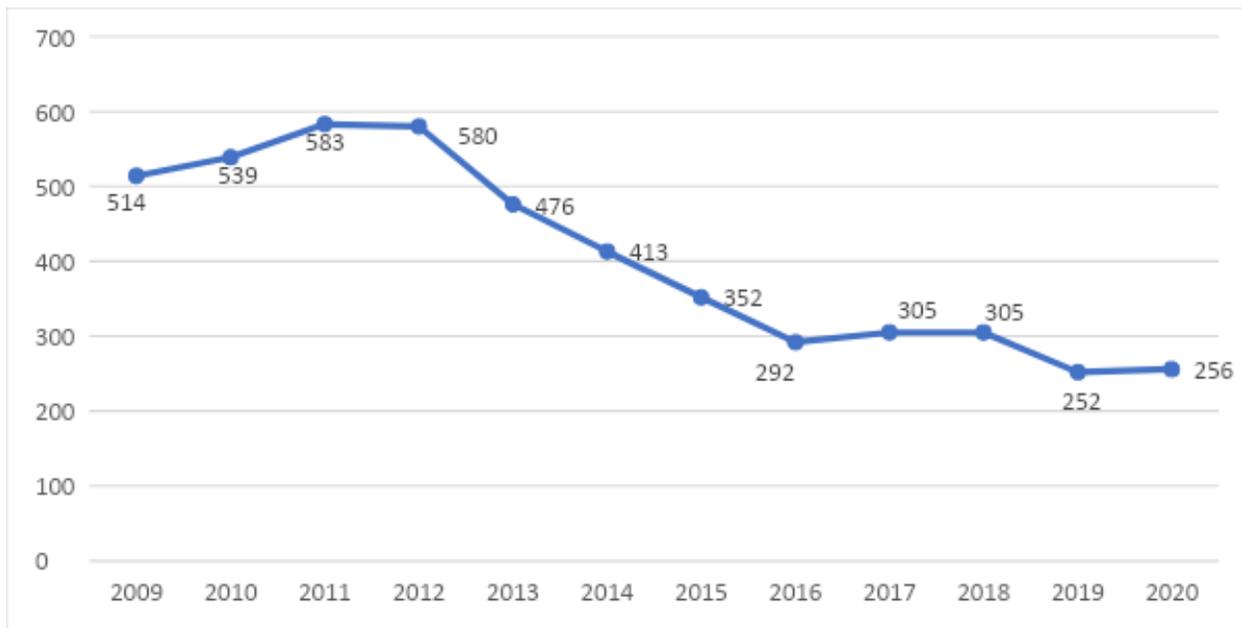


Diagram 20. The number of Afghan citizens who had refugee status in the Russian Federation at the end of the year or the beginning of the previous year from 2009 to 2020. (according to statistics from the Federal Migration Service of Russia and the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation)

The picture is also sad with the statistics regarding the citizens of Afghanistan who have the status of temporary asylum in Russia. Their number has more than halved over the past ten years, and the decline in the number of those who had temporary asylum, which began in 2015 and lasted for three years, stopped only in 2018. In 2019, there was an increase in the number of temporary asylum seekers by 10%, but in 2020 the number dropped again to 514 people.

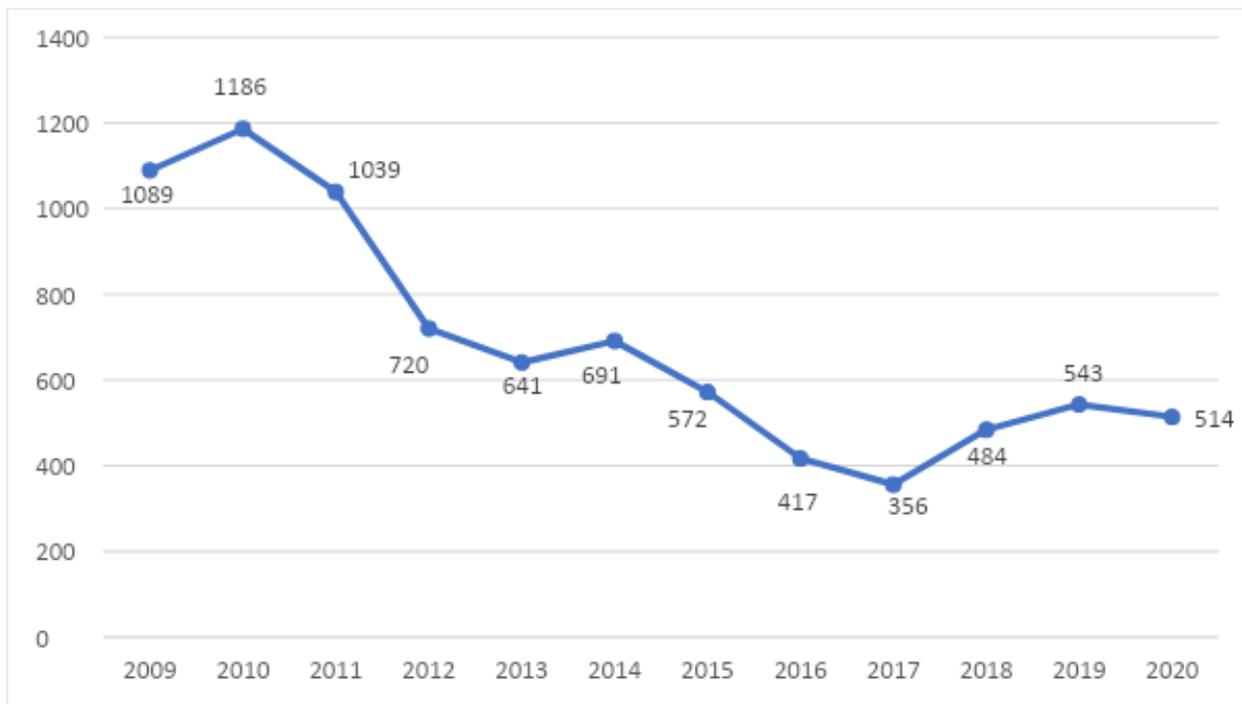


Diagram 21. The number of Afghan citizens who had the status of temporary asylum in the Russian Federation at the end of the year from 2009 to 2020. (according to statistics from the Federal Migration Service of Russia and the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation)

At the same time, the number of those who managed to apply for temporary asylum status in 2018 almost doubled compared to 2017 and increased even more in 2019, but in 2020 there was an almost two-fold decrease, and the percentage of temporary asylum provision, to those who applied despite numerous obstacles, has remained low in recent years, so that only about two out of five Afghans, who have applied for temporary asylum, eventually get it.

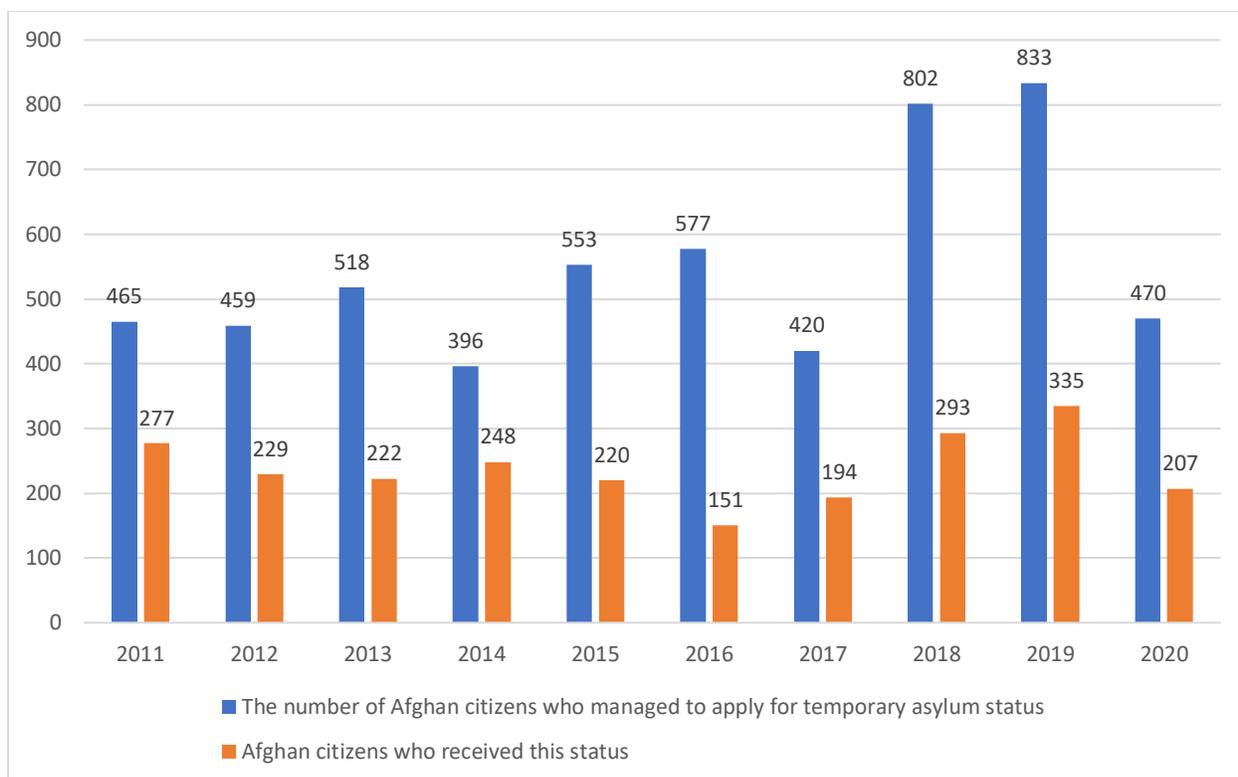


Diagram 22. The number of Afghan citizens who managed to apply for temporary asylum status, and Afghan citizens who received this status in the Russian Federation at the end of the year from 2011 to 2020. (according to the data of the FMS of Russia and the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation)

It should be noted that compared to 2019, the number of those citizens of Afghanistan who were admitted to Russian citizenship by the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation in 2020 has increased. If in 2019 there were 501 such people, then in 2020 - 982 people.

The situation with refugees in the world remains very difficult, while the Russian authorities have not increased support for people forced to leave their homes for many years, and even did the opposite - reduced it. New anti-records of the Russian migration service, observations of our employees, stories of refugees testify that the institution of asylum in Russia has been destroyed. Employees of the migration departments of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation, who are responsible of working with refugees, usually only imitate the functioning of this institution. We can only repeat what we said in our annual report a year ago: "The situation can only begin to change with an awareness of the existing problems, as well as a readiness for radical reforms with a reorientation of the migration service to protect the rights of refugees."