

Putin Extends Fast-Track Russian Citizenship to All Ukrainians

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*On Monday, Russian **President Vladimir Putin** [extended a fast-track process to obtaining Russian citizenship for all Ukrainians](#).*

A decree [signed by Putin](#) says residents of Ukraine and the breakaway Donbas republics “are entitled to appeal for admission to citizenship of the Russian Federation via simplified procedure.”

The decree makes it so that Ukrainians no longer need to meet a series of preconditions to obtain Russian passports, such as taking a Russian language test and living in Russia for five years.

Russia first applied the simplified citizenship process to the Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts in the Donbas in 2019. In May, Putin extended the waiver to the southeastern oblasts of Kherson and Zaporizhzhia, both of which are now mostly controlled by Russia.

According to the UN, [over 1.5 million Ukrainians](#) have fled to Russia since Putin launched the invasion on February 24. The decree gives the Ukrainians that have fled to Russia the option of staying regardless of what region they came from.

Ukrainian officials slammed Putin’s move and have accused Russia of forcing Ukrainians to flee to Russian territory.

“The purpose of this criminal policy is not just to steal people, but to make those who are deported forget about Ukraine and unable to return,” Ukrainian **President Volodymyr Zelensky** said.

Putin’s decree is also being taken as a signal that the Russian leader is planning to annex Ukrainian territory. Russian-installed officials in Kherson and Zaporizhzhia have both said

they're [considering holding a referendum on joining Russia](#).

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