

# More Than 500 Syrians Stranded in Cold on Russian Border With Norway – Report

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Around 1,200 asylum seekers have entered Norway through Russia this year, compared to 12 in 2014, the report said, citing the Norwegian Directorate of Immigration.

More than 500 Syrian refugees have been left stranded on Russia's border with Norway in the northern Murmansk region, the FlashNord news site reported Thursday.

Guards on the Russian side of the border at the Borisoglebsk checkpoint on Thursday morning refused to let the refugees cross into Norway, leaving them stranded, the report said.

Temperatures in Nikel — the closest town to the checkpoint — hovered around freezing on Thursday, the Gismeteo weather forecaster's website showed, and some of the refugees had caught a cold, FlashNord said.

The news comes a day after FlashNord reported around 100 refugees had sent a letter to Russian President Vladimir Putin asking for his urgent help after being turned away at the crossing point.

Though not a member of the European Union, Norway is a member of the Schengen zone, which would give Syrian refugees who enter Norway free access to other European countries. The route into Europe through Russia is also considered by many Syrian refugees to be a safer, although longer, journey than crossing the Mediterranean.

Norway's Justice Minister Anders Anundsen was cited by Reuters as saying on public broadcaster NRK earlier this month that his country would start returning Syrian refugees to Russia if they had lived there for an extended period before traveling on to Norway.

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