

How Russian State Media Invented 'Huge' Lines Outside the U.S. Embassy

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The U.S. Embassy in Moscow on Tuesday morning **The Moscow Times**

One day before the U.S diplomatic mission to Russia is due to stop processing non-immigrant visas, Russian state media reported long queues outside the U.S. Embassy in Moscow — even as the situation on the ground told a different story.

The state-run RIA Novosti news agency on Tuesday [reported](#) that “a long line of people who came for interviews or to pick up their visas” had formed in front of the U.S. Embassy on Novinsky Bulvar.

Other Russian media, including the Metro and Life.ru outlets, also claimed long queues had formed in front of the American diplomatic mission, with the state-run Vesti.ru describing the crowd size as “gigantic.”

The RIA article was shared on social media with a picture of crowds standing outside the embassy, but the picture was quickly outed on social media as being taken at a vigil in July in

honor of Linkin Park singer, Chester Bennington. RIA later deleted the tweet.

The U.S. Embassy in Russia on Monday announced it planned to temporarily suspend processing all non-immigrant visa applications for Russian citizens beginning Aug 23.

The announcement said operations in Moscow would resume in September, with consular services for Russians in St. Petersburg, Vladivostok, and Yekaterinburg remaining "suspended indefinitely."

For Russians, the announcement spells long delays with visas taking months longer to review and all future applications going through Moscow.

A RBC journalist [said](#) there were about seven people waiting outside the consular section and around 10 journalists early on Tuesday morning.

A Moscow Times reporter at Novinsky Bulvar on Tuesday morning between 11:15 a.m. 12:45 p.m. said the area around the embassy was quiet except for other journalists and television crews, with roughly ten people coming out of the consular section during an hour-long period.

Related article: [Moscow Responds to U.S. Visa Freeze With Accusations of Political Meddling](#)

Georgy Makarov, 20, told The Moscow Times he came to the embassy after hearing Monday's news to pick up his student visa.

"Everything went well," he said. "This is my third year getting a student visa to study business."

Dmitry, who declined to give his last name and works in telecommunications, had less positive news, saying his visa was denied.

"I was planning on visiting relatives in New York," he said. "It slightly changes my plans, but I guess once this debacle with the visas ends, I'll apply again."

Another visitor, Olga Tsvetkova, 32, who works in IT also saw her U.S. travel plans canceled. "I had really high hopes about getting a visa," she said. "Oh well, I guess I could go to the U.S. embassies in Warsaw, Belarus, or Vilnius."

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