

Tech talent fleeing Russia under the weight of Ukraine invasion and resulting Western sanctions

Article

The news: Millions of Russian professionals, including thousands of entrepreneurs and tech workers, are exiting the country—but they could struggle to establish themselves abroad due to growing anti-Russia sentiment and economic sanctions.

Why it's worth watching: Russia's invasion of Ukraine accelerated a brain-drain stretching back decades, [per](#) Insider.

“People want to get out of Russia,” **Roman Shaposhnik**, the Russia-born co-founder and CTO of edge computing company **Zededa**, [told](#) TechCrunch. “Many don't want to abandon their careers and hope that their exile will be only temporary. It's something that they worked on for five to 10 years of their life. And now, the prospect of giving it up is brutal.”

- Big Tech companies like **Apple**, **Google**, **Amazon**, and **PayPal** have [ceased operations and closed offices](#) in Russia, erasing thousands of jobs and entire industries.
- At least 33 foreign airlines have stopped flying to Russia, and the majority of European airports prohibit Russian flights from entering their airspace. That means refugees are limited to crossing the border into **Finland** or the **Baltic** states.
- Those without EU visas, however, can only head to **Armenia**, **Georgia**, or **Turkey**, which have Russian dissident communities.

Out in the cold: While European neighbors and other countries have opened their doors to Ukrainian refugees fleeing the war, most Russians seeking exile aren't given [refugee](#) status.

[Escalating financial sanctions](#), corporate divestment, and the closure of various internet services slammed the door on the income of online workers. While some multinational companies are relocating staff and their families, part-time and contract workers may have no recourse but to flee.

What's next? Growing anti-Russia sentiment and the inability to use services like **PayPal**, **Visa**, and **MasterCard** are hobbling émigrés' efforts to relocate and restart their businesses. In some cases, payment cards linked to Russian banks won't work in other countries—leaving expats [scrambling](#) to access funds. Back in Russia, the exodus of tech and entrepreneurial talent will impede future innovation and growth well after any potential resolution to the conflict.