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## **TRANSIT VISAS FOR RUSSIAN NATIONALS**

On 6 August 2018, new instructions (E2.115) came into force which ban Russian individuals expelled from certain countries for activities incompatible with their diplomatic status.

Instruction E2.115(b) states that such a person may not be granted a visa to enter New Zealand, 'including a transit visa'.

We can confirm the transit visa reference in this instruction was a drafting error. The intent of the instruction was not meant to restrict the grant of transit visas to these individuals. Operational Policy intends to correct the error in the next release of the Operational Manual later this year.

In the meantime, in cases where a Russian national wishes to transit through New Zealand, and standard verification checks have been undertaken, immigration officers are encouraged to consider using their discretion under s87 of the Act to grant a transit visa as an exception to current instructions (see E7.5).

Please provide this advice to officers who make transit visa decisions.