

Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

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Russia

16
/100

NOT FREE

<u>Political Rights</u>	5 /40
<u>Civil Liberties</u>	11 /60

LAST YEAR'S SCORE & STATUS

19 /100 **Not Free**

Global freedom statuses are calculated on a weighted scale. See the methodology.



TOP

Overview

Power in Russia's authoritarian political system is concentrated in the hands of President Vladimir Putin. With loyalist security forces, a subservient judiciary, a controlled media environment, and a legislature consisting of a ruling party and pliable opposition factions, the Kremlin manipulates elections and suppresses genuine dissent. Rampant corruption facilitates shifting links among state officials and organized crime groups. Russian forces invaded Ukraine in February 2022, with the government curtailing rights and individual liberties even further to stifle domestic dissent.

Key Developments in 2022

- Russian forces launched an invasion of Ukraine in late February. Ukrainian forces repelled an early push against their capital of Kyiv and mounted a major counteroffensive in September. Russia, which illegally annexed four Ukrainian oblasts after orchestrating sham referendums there, maintained a foothold in the east at year's end. Evidence has emerged of Russian forces committing war crimes against Ukrainian civilians, including kidnapping, sexual violence, and murder.
- Russians left the country in large numbers after the war began, with the Federal Security Service (FSB) reporting that 3.9 million people departed in the first quarter of the year. The government launched a "partial mobilization" to bolster its war effort in late September. Some Russian media outlets estimated that as many as 700,000 people, mostly military-aged men, left Russia in the following two weeks to avoid being drafted.
- Moscow cracked down on domestic dissent, including by criminalizing antiwar demonstrations in March. Protesters and bystanders faced arrest and physical mistreatment including torture. Some 13,500 people were arrested in early March, while nearly 2,400 more were detained within days of the September mobilization announcement.
- The government concealed information about the war and its effects on the country, withholding economic data and severely restricting media coverage. The Kremlin was similarly opaque about casualties.

Political Rights

A. Electoral Process

A1 0-4 pts

Was the current head of government or other chief national authority elected through free and fair elections?

0 / 4

The constitution establishes a strong presidency with the power to dismiss and appoint, pending parliamentary confirmation, the prime minister. The president is elected for as many as two consecutive six-year terms. Constitutional amendments approved in 2020 allow Putin, but not future presidents, to run for an additional two consecutive terms, potentially extending his rule to 2036.

As with past elections, Putin's 2018 reelection campaign benefited from advantages including preferential media treatment, numerous abuses of incumbency, and procedural irregularities during the vote count. His most influential rival, Aleksey Navalny, was disqualified before the campaign began due to a politically motivated criminal conviction, creating what the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) called "a lack of genuine competition." The funding sources for Putin's campaign were notably opaque.

A2 0-4 pts

Were the current national legislative representatives elected through free and fair elections?

0 / 4

The Federal Assembly consists of the 450-seat State Duma and an upper chamber, the Federation Council. Half of Duma members are elected by nationwide proportional representation, and the other half are elected in single-member districts, with all serving five-year terms. Electoral rules are designed to benefit the ruling party, United Russia.

In the 2021 Duma elections, United Russia won 324 seats, maintaining its supermajority. The main Kremlin-approved opposition parties—the Communist Party, A Just Russia, the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia, and the New People party—won 118 seats combined. Three smaller parties and five independents won 8 seats. Turnout

stood at 52 percent. The three-day election featured the first use of an opaque online voting system.

The OSCE was unable to observe the polls due to government-imposed restrictions on the number of observers. Russian election-monitoring group Golos and independent media reported violations including vote buying, pressure on voters, “clone” candidates, and ballot stuffing. Authorities pressured Apple and Google into removing the Navalny-backed Smart Voting mobile application from their online stores. Some opposition candidates were not permitted to register. After delayed online-voting results were released, pro-Kremlin candidates were declared the victors in Moscow districts where challengers had built early leads, prompting further accusations of fraud.

Gubernatorial elections were held in 15 regions in September 2022. Voters in 6 regions also participated in legislative polls, as did voters in 125 district councils in Moscow. United Russia won four gubernatorial races, all six regional legislatures, and 1,100 seats in Moscow. The polls were marred by the absence of genuine opposition candidates, ballot stuffing, intimidation, and the use of prefilled ballots.

A3 0-4 pts

Are the electoral laws and framework fair, and are they implemented impartially by the relevant election management bodies?

0 / 4

Russia’s electoral system is designed to maintain the dominance of United Russia. The authorities frequently change electoral laws and the timing of elections in order to secure advantages for their preferred candidates. Opposition candidates have little chance of success in appealing these decisions or in securing a level playing field.

In March 2022, President Putin signed legislation mandating the use of an online voting system for referendums and elections nationwide. Online voting systems, which were used in the 2021 Duma elections, had raised concerns about ballot security and secrecy.

B. Political Pluralism and Participation

B1 0-4 pts

Do the people have the right to organize in different political parties or other competitive political groupings of their choice, and is the system free of undue obstacles to the rise and fall of these competing parties or groupings?

1 / 4

The multiparty system is carefully managed by the Kremlin, which tolerates only superficial competition against United Russia. A 2012 law liberalized party-registration rules, allowing the creation of hundreds of new parties. However, none posed a significant political threat to the regime, and many seemed designed to encourage division and confusion among the opposition. The Justice Ministry has repeatedly refused to register Navalny's political party. In 2021, Navalny's Anti-Corruption Foundation was declared an extremist organization, effectively preventing anyone associated with it from running for office.

Three parties—New People, For Truth, and Green Alternative—qualified for the 2021 Duma polls after meeting a voting threshold in the 2020 local elections. However, each has links to United Russia, allowing Kremlin-friendly political figures to distance themselves from the ruling party and siphon off voters who might otherwise support genuine opposition parties.

B2 0-4 pts

Is there a realistic opportunity for the opposition to increase its support or gain power through elections?

0 / 4

Russia has never experienced a democratic transfer of power between rival groups. Then prime minister Putin became acting president when Boris Yeltsin resigned in late 1999. Putin served two four-year presidential terms from 2000 to 2008, remained the de facto paramount leader when returning to the prime ministership, and again became president in 2012, violating the spirit if not the letter of the constitution's two-term limit. A 2008 constitutional amendment extended presidential terms to six years, and a 2020 amendment allowed Putin to run for an additional two terms, meaning he could remain in office until 2036.

Opposition politicians and activists are frequently targeted with fabricated criminal cases and other forms of administrative harassment designed to prevent their participation in the political process. Aleksey Navalny was poisoned with a toxic nerve agent in 2020, with evidence later emerging that the FSB poisoned him. Navalny, who sought medical attention in Germany, was arrested upon his return in January 2021 for violating probation. In January 2022, Navalny and eight prominent supporters were added to the government’s terrorist-and-extremist registry. In March, Navalny—who was already imprisoned in a penal colony—received a nine-year sentence over embezzlement and contempt-of-court charges in a politically motivated trial.

Legislation enacted in 2021 banned individuals associated with extremist organizations from running for election. Among other restrictions, Russian citizens who hold a second citizenship or a foreign residence permit and people who have been found guilty of one of 400 criminal and administrative offenses were unable to run for office as of that year. Also in 2021, Golos reported that nearly one-tenth of all Russian adults had effectively been denied the right to run.

B3 0-4 pts

Are the people’s political choices free from domination by forces that are external to the political sphere, or by political forces that employ extrapolitical means?

1 / 4

Russia’s numerous security agencies work to maintain tight control over society and prevent any political challenges to the regime. The country’s leadership is also closely intertwined with powerful business magnates who benefit from government patronage in exchange for political loyalty and various forms of service. The Russian Orthodox Church similarly works to support the status quo, receiving financial support and a privileged status in return. Many employers—particularly in the public sector—pressure their employees to vote, partly to deliver the government’s desired level of voter turnout.

B4 0-4 pts

Do various segments of the population (including ethnic, racial, religious, gender, LGBT+, and other relevant groups) have full political rights and electoral opportunities?

1 / 4

The formation of parties based on ethnicity or religion is not permitted by law. In practice, many regions inhabited by distinct ethnic groups are carefully monitored and controlled by federal authorities. Most republics in the North Caucasus area and some autonomous districts in energy-rich western Siberia have opted out of direct gubernatorial elections; instead, their legislatures choose a governor from candidates proposed by the president.

Women are underrepresented in politics and government, holding only 16.2 percent of Duma seats and 21.9 percent of Federation Council seats. Few women serve as cabinet members, and many issues of importance to women are not prominent in Russian politics.

LGBT+ people face major challenges in pursuing their political interests. Marriage was defined as a union between a man and a woman under constitutional amendments enacted in 2021. In April 2022, a court effectively shuttered the LGBT Network and its parent nongovernmental organization (NGO), the Charitable Sphere Foundation; the Justice Ministry had accused the latter of engaging in “political activities using foreign property.”

C. Functioning of Government

C1 0-4 pts

Do the freely elected head of government and national legislative representatives determine the policies of the government?

0 / 4

President Putin dominates the political system, along with powerful allies in the security services and the business sector. These groups effectively control the output of the parliament, which is not freely elected. The 2020 constitutional amendments formalized the power of the president over the legislature and allow Putin to retain the presidency until 2036. Legislation passed in 2021 increased political centralization at the expense of regional autonomy. However, the federal authorities have limited ability to impose policy decisions in Chechnya, where Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov has been granted unchecked power in exchange for violently suppressing dissent and keeping the republic within the Russian Federation.

C2 0-4 pts

Are safeguards against official corruption strong and effective?

1 / 4

Corruption in the government and the business world is pervasive, and a lack of accountability enables officials to engage in malfeasance with impunity. Many analysts have argued that the political system is essentially a kleptocracy, a regime whose defining characteristic is the plunder of public wealth by ruling elites. Some of these elites openly work to fulfill President Putin's policy aims and receive government contracts and protection from prosecution in return for their loyalty.

In December 2022, Putin exempted government officials, including individuals deployed to Ukraine, from following a 2008 anticorruption law that mandated the disclosure of income and assets. Putin's decree also allowed Russian forces in Ukraine to receive "rewards and gifts" deemed humanitarian in nature.

C3 0-4 pts

Does the government operate with openness and transparency?

1 / 4

There is little transparency and accountability in the day-to-day workings of the government, particularly at the federal level where decisions are adopted behind closed doors by a small group of individuals.

Official opacity further increased after the war in Ukraine began. The government restricted access to economic statistics, including trade data, as 2022 progressed, while the central bank allowed financial institutions to forgo publishing statements in March. In June, the Duma passed a bill that would make information on Russia's currency and gold reserves a state secret in its first reading. Russian authorities are similarly opaque about the war itself, providing infrequent updates on casualties and providing figures that observers believe are significant undercounts. Soldiers' relatives, meanwhile, report receiving misleading or false information about their loved ones.

Civil Liberties

D. Freedom of Expression and Belief

D1 0-4 pts

Are there free and independent media?

0 / 4

Although the constitution provides for freedom of speech, vague laws on extremism grant the authorities great discretion to crack down on any speech, organization, or activity that lacks official support. The government controls, directly or through state-owned companies and friendly business magnates, all national television networks and many radio and print outlets, as well as most of the media advertising market.

Laws on extremism, foreign agents, and undesirable organizations have been used to harass media outlets, curtailing their access to funding and forcing many to cease operations in Russia. In 2020, the foreign agents law was expanded to apply to individuals and informal organizations. Under a measure passed by the Duma in June 2022 and enforced beginning in December, anyone “under foreign influence” or who received any type of foreign support is considered a foreign agent. Under that measure, Roskomnadzor, the federal media and telecommunications agency, can block websites classified as foreign agents at the Justice Ministry’s request.

As the war against Ukraine began, Roskomnadzor instructed outlets to only use Defense Ministry updates and to refrain from using words like “war” or “invasion” when discussing it. The government also began restricting access to a wide variety of websites, including those of domestic and foreign news outlets. Echo of Moscow, one of Russia’s few remaining independent media outlets, closed that month after Roskomnadzor accused it of sharing “deliberately false” news. Later that month, after receiving a warning from Roskomnadzor, *Novaya Gazeta* said it would suspend its operations. In September, the newspaper’s media license was stripped. By November, the websites of 175 domestic outlets and hundreds of foreign-based outlets were blocked.

A series of laws require social networks to remove “illegal” content, fine websites that fail to block such content, and enforce prison sentences for online “libel,” among other provisions. In March 2022, Roskomnadzor blocked access to Facebook, saying it discriminated against Russian media. Instagram was also blocked that month, after authorities said it hosted extremist content. Under criminal-code revisions passed in March, the dissemination of “false news” about the Russian military can be punished with prison terms as long as 15 years.

D2 0-4 pts

Are individuals free to practice and express their religious faith or nonbelief in public and private?

1 / 4

Freedom of religion is upheld unevenly. A 1997 law on religion gives the state extensive control and makes it difficult for new or independent groups to operate. The Russian Orthodox Church has a privileged position, working closely with the government on foreign and domestic policy priorities. Antiterrorism legislation approved in 2016 grants authorities the power to suppress religious groups that are deemed extremist.

The Jehovah’s Witnesses were declared an extremist organization in 2017, leading to a protracted campaign against worshippers marked by surveillance, property seizures, arrests, and torture. Over 600 Jehovah’s Witnesses have since been charged with or convicted of extremism as of September 2022. In June, the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) declared the ban on Jehovah’s Witnesses unlawful and ordered Russia to pay reparations, discontinue criminal proceedings, release imprisoned individuals, and return confiscated property. That same month, the Duma voted to end the ECtHR’s jurisdiction over Russia retroactively to March. (Russia ceased to be party to the European Convention on Human Rights in September.)

Many Muslims have been detained in recent years for alleged membership in banned Islamist groups, including the peaceful Islamic movement Hizb ut-Tahrir.

Religious leaders have been pressured to support the war in Ukraine, with the authorities targeting figures who publicly opposed the invasion.

D3 0-4 pts

Is there academic freedom, and is the educational system free from

0 / 4

The higher education system and the government-controlled Academy of Sciences are hampered by bureaucratic interference, state-imposed international isolation, and pressure to toe the Kremlin line on politically sensitive topics. Several universities have banned student and faculty participation in antigovernment rallies or threatened students with expulsion should they participate. Educators have also been fired for attending or sharing information about protests on social media. Educators and academics must also receive permission from authorities for public “educational activities.”

Russian authorities have further manipulated the country’s education system after the war against Ukraine began. Schools and teachers have been ordered to hold “patriotic education” classes, use state-sanctioned language to describe the invasion, and openly defend the war in their classrooms. Educators who did not comply or expressed opposition to the war were fined or dismissed. Students who withdraw from a related class reportedly risk punishment. In November, the Education Ministry announced that Soviet-era compulsory military training would be introduced in high schools in 2023. Under legislative measures that took effect in December 2022, so-called foreign agents were banned from teaching in public schools.

After the invasion of Ukraine, the government forbade scientists from attending international conferences. In March 2022, it declared a science newspaper, *Troitsky Variant*, a foreign agent after it published a letter opposing the war. That same month, the Education Ministry announced that sociology, political science, and cultural studies would no longer be taught at pedagogical institutes. Several academics have fled Russia for fear of persecution, some of whom have consequently have been fired or have otherwise faced retaliation.

Score Change: The score declined from 1 to 0 because the Russian government exposed students to propaganda related to its invasion of Ukraine, prohibited academics from attending international conferences, and has targeted educators and students who oppose or are perceived as opposing the invasion.

D4 0-4 pts

sensitive topics without fear of surveillance or retribution?	
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Pervasive, hyperpatriotic propaganda and political repression have had a cumulative impact on open and free private discussion, which is exacerbated by state control over online expression.

A series of laws impose fines or prison sentences for insulting the state, spreading purportedly false news, committing libel, and using social media to discuss the personal information of judges and law enforcement officials or to share information on corruption. These laws have been expanded since Putin's regime launched its invasion of Ukraine and have been used along with other laws to punish and deter dissent. By September 2022, 100 individuals had faced prosecution or received convictions under criminal-code revisions on spreading "false" information about the Russian military.

In September 2022, the *New York Times* reported that Roskomnadzor actively monitors social networks and tracks internet users who share antigovernment content online, some of whom were subsequently arrested or fled the country.

Some Russians have been reported to authorities by fellow citizens for voicing opposition to the government.

E. Associational and Organizational Rights

E1 0-4 pts

Is there freedom of assembly?	0 / 4
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The government restricts freedom of assembly. Overwhelming police responses, the excessive use of force, routine arrests, and harsh fines and prison sentences have largely discouraged unsanctioned protests, while pro-Kremlin groups are able to demonstrate freely.

It is extremely difficult for the Kremlin's opponents to obtain permission to hold a protest or rally. At the regional level, extensive location-based restrictions prohibit assemblies in as much as 70 percent of public space. Authorities can ban rallies on vaguely defined "public interest" grounds. Those who are labeled foreign agents are prohibited from organizing public events under legislation that took effect in December 2022. In addition, authorities employ an expansive surveillance apparatus to monitor activists and use facial-recognition technology to identify and arrest demonstrators.

The government cracked down on public assemblies in 2022 as it waged war against Ukraine. Criminal-code revisions passed in March criminalized antiwar demonstrations. Security personnel used excessive force to disperse rallies, which were held nationwide as the war began. OVD-Info, a Russian human rights NGO, reported that 13,500 people were arrested, including at least 100 minors, by early March. Security personnel physically attacked demonstrators and bystanders while dispersing rallies; detainees were regularly mistreated, threatened with physical violence, and tortured after being taken into custody. OVD-Info also reported that at least 13 journalists who covered antiwar rallies were detained as of early March. Authorities were similarly harsh in dispersing protests against a September mobilization order; nearly 2,400 people were detained as of September 26.

E2 0-4 pts

Is there freedom for nongovernmental organizations, particularly those that are engaged in human rights– and governance-related work?

0 / 4

The government has relentlessly persecuted NGOs, particularly those that work on human rights and governance issues. Civic activists are frequently arrested on politically motivated charges.

Authorities impede and block NGO work by requiring groups that receive foreign support and are deemed to engage in broadly defined "political activity" to register as foreign agents. This designation, which is interpreted by much of the Russian public as denoting a foreign spying operation, entails onerous registration requirements, obliges groups to tag their materials with a "foreign agent" label, and makes it extremely difficult for them to pursue their objectives. Authorities can designate individuals and practically all legal entities as foreign agents. Those who fail to comply

with the law risk fines or prison time. Some 31 individual activists were counted as foreign agents in 2021, while 73 organizations were on the Justice Ministry's foreign agents list as of February 2022.

In 2021, Putin signed laws making it easier to open criminal cases for alleged affiliation with "undesirable" organizations.

The Russian government continued to curtail civil society activity in 2022. In February, the Supreme Court upheld its 2021 decision to shutter International Memorial, the parent organization of the Memorial Human Rights Center (PTM), for violating the law on foreign agents. PTM's dissolution was confirmed in an April appellate court ruling. Also in April, the Justice Ministry banned 15 foreign-based NGOs from Russia. Legislative measures that took effect in December, meanwhile, expanded the definition of a foreign agent to include any legal entity.

E3 0-4 pts

Is there freedom for trade unions and similar professional or labor organizations?

2 / 4

While trade union rights are legally protected, they are limited in practice. Strikes and worker protests have occurred in prominent industries, including automobile manufacturing, but antiunion discrimination and reprisals are common. Employers often ignore collective bargaining rights. The largest labor federation works in close cooperation with the Kremlin, though independent unions are active in some industrial sectors and regions.

In August 2022, the Journalists and Media Workers' Union was found guilty of "discrediting the Russian armed forces" and fined after issuing a statement against the war in Ukraine in February. In September, a Moscow court dissolved it.

F. Rule of Law

F1 0-4 pts

Is there an independent judiciary?

1 / 4

The judiciary lacks independence from the executive branch, and judges' career advancement is effectively tied to compliance with Kremlin preferences. The Presidential Personnel Commission and court chairpersons control the appointment of the country's judges, who tend to be promoted from inside the judicial system rather than gaining independent experience as lawyers. The 2020 constitutional amendments empowered the president to remove judges from the Constitutional Court and the Supreme Court, with the support of the Federation Council, further narrowing the judiciary's already negligible autonomy.

F2 0-4 pts

Does due process prevail in civil and criminal matters?

1 / 4

Safeguards against arbitrary arrest and other due process guarantees are regularly violated, particularly for individuals who oppose or are perceived as threatening to the interests of the regime and its allies. Many Russians have consequently sought justice from international courts, but a 2015 law authorizes the Russian judiciary to overrule the decisions of such bodies. In June 2022, the Duma voted to retroactively end ECtHR jurisdiction, closing another legal option for Russians. Under legislation signed in 2021, police officers have broad authority to break into homes and vehicles and search personal belongings without a warrant.

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe reported in May 2022 that there were 447 political prisoners in Russia, 360 of them held in connection with the exercise of religious freedom.

F3 0-4 pts

Is there protection from the illegitimate use of physical force and freedom from war and insurgencies?

0 / 4

Use of excessive force by police is widespread, and rights groups have reported that law enforcement agents who carry out such abuses have deliberately employed electric shocks, suffocation, and the stretching of a detainee's body so as to avoid leaving visible injuries.

Chechen leader Kadyrov has been accused of using abductions, torture, extrajudicial killings, and other forms of violence to maintain control. Kadyrov is also suspected of arranging the assassination of asylum seekers and opponents-in-exile in other parts of Russia and abroad.

Many men conscripted to fight in Ukraine following the February 2022 invasion were reportedly coerced into signing service contracts, and there were reports of military personnel being misled about whether they would be sent to Ukraine. Those who refused to fight risked detention and mistreatment; some objectors were reportedly threatened with execution. In Chechnya, authorities have used threats, blackmail, and intimidation to force locals to “volunteer” for military service in Ukraine.

Violent incidents were also reported during the September mobilization drive. An officer was shot and gravely wounded at an enlistment office in the city of Ust-Ilimsk that month. In October, 11 soldiers were killed in a Belgorod facility, with the Defense Ministry claiming that 2 volunteers were responsible.

Russia proper was affected by the war during the year, with Ukrainian forces attacking military assets within Russian territory on several occasions. In December 2022, for example, three people were killed in a Ukrainian drone attack on the Engels air base in Saratov Oblast.

Prisons are overcrowded and unsanitary; inmates lack health-care access and are subject to abuse by guards. Prisoners have also been solicited and coerced to fight in Ukraine. In November, Putin signed amended legislation allowing for the conscription of recently released prisoners.

F4 0-4 pts

Do laws, policies, and practices guarantee equal treatment of various segments of the population?

0 / 4

Immigrants and ethnic minorities—particularly those who appear to be from the Caucasus or Central Asia—face governmental and societal discrimination and harassment; local NGOs and officials reported that ethnic minorities were disproportionately targeted in the mobilization drive that began in September 2022. Constitutional amendments establish the primacy of the Russian language within the state, favoring ethnic Russians by implication.

LGBT+ people are subject to considerable discrimination. Under a 2013 law that was amended in December 2022, the promotion of “nontraditional sexual relations and/or preferences” is banned. The original law banned the promotion of “nontraditional lifestyles” to minors.

Chechnya remains particularly dangerous for LGBT+ people. In February 2022, two Chechen LGBT+ siblings received prison sentences for “aiding illegal armed groups.” The siblings, who managed a Telegram channel critical of Chechen authorities, fled to the city of Nizhny Novgorod in 2020 but were abducted by Chechen police in 2021. Their sentences were upheld in October 2022. In July, Chechen police were filmed detaining three people in Grozny and interrogating at least one about same-sex activity. Two acquaintances reportedly disappeared soon after.

In November 2022, Putin issued a decree allowing dual citizens, Russians with permanent-resident status in foreign countries, and stateless individuals to be conscripted.

G. Personal Autonomy and Individual Rights

G1 0-4 pts

Do individuals enjoy freedom of movement, including the ability to change their place of residence, employment, or education?

1/4

The government restricts freedoms of movement and residence. Adults must carry internal passports while traveling and to obtain many government services. Some regional authorities impose registration rules that limit the right of citizens to choose their place of residence, typically targeting members of ethnic minorities and migrants from the Caucasus and Central Asia.

Russians have emigrated in large numbers after the invasion of Ukraine began. In May 2022, the FSB reported that 3.9 million people left in the first calendar quarter, though stated reasons included tourism and private business. More left after the partial mobilization was announced in September, with 700,000 leaving within two weeks of the announcement according to *Forbes Russia*. Some who tried to flee during the

mobilization drive were met by security personnel who delivered conscription notices at border points.

Employees of the military and security services were banned from foreign travel in 2014. Following the September 2022 mobilization, reservists in many regions were prohibited from leaving their home districts, and men who received mobilization summons were refused passports. Authorities launched raids to locate military-age men during the mobilization, including those who were ostensibly exempt. Naturalized citizens who are considered opponents of the war also face restrictions; in November, Putin proposed legislative amendments that would allow for the revocation of their passports.

Ukrainians have been forcibly sent to Russia in large numbers. In August 2022, Interfax reported that over 3.4 million Ukrainians, including 556,000 children, were in Russia. The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, meanwhile, said 2.9 million Ukrainian refugees were in Russia in October. In September, the United Nations accused Moscow of forcing Ukrainian children into Russia with the aim of facilitating their adoptions there.

In late October, Putin approved an order imposing movement restrictions in several regions in Russia proper and Crimea.

Score Change: The score declined from 2 to 1 because the government restricts movement for Russians who receive mobilization orders, live in areas placed under wartime restrictions, or are perceived as opponents of the war against Ukraine, while Ukrainians have been forcibly deported to Russia proper or Russian-controlled territory.

G2 0-4 pts

Are individuals able to exercise the right to own property and establish private businesses without undue interference from state or nonstate actors?

1 / 4

State power and private property are intimately connected, with senior officials often using their government positions to amass vast property holdings. State takeovers of key industries and large tax penalties imposed on select companies after dubious legal proceedings have illustrated the precarious nature of property rights under Putin's

rule, especially when political interests are involved. Private businesses more broadly are routinely targeted for extortion or expropriation by law enforcement officials and organized criminal groups.

Two laws passed in July 2022 compel private businesses to supply the military with goods and services and force employees to work overtime to support the war effort.

G3 0-4 pts

Do individuals enjoy personal social freedoms, including choice of marriage partner and size of family, protection from domestic violence, and control over appearance?

2/4

Constitutional amendments approved in 2020 define marriage as a union between a man and a woman; the changes were formally adopted in 2021, effectively barring any future law recognizing same-sex marriage.

Domestic violence receives little attention from the authorities. Survivors who kill their abusers in self-defense are commonly imprisoned. A 2017 law decriminalized acts of domestic violence that do not result in permanent physical harm. The measure also relieved police of the obligation to initiate cases, transferring that burden to survivors. Over 12,000 women may have died in domestic violence incidents between 2011 and 2019 according to a 2021 report published by the Russian Consortium of Women's NGOs.

Residents of certain regions, particularly in the North Caucasus, face tighter societal restrictions on personal appearance and relationships, and some so-called honor killings have been reported. In Chechnya, Kadyrov has spoken in favor of polygamy and sought to compel divorced couples to remarry.

G4 0-4 pts

Do individuals enjoy equality of opportunity and freedom from economic exploitation?

1/4

Legal protections against labor exploitation are poorly enforced. Migrant workers are often exposed to unsafe or exploitative working conditions. Both Russians facing economic hardship and migrants to Russia from other countries are vulnerable to sex

and labor trafficking. Trafficking victims are routinely detained, deported, and prosecuted for activity they were forced to participate in.

As the war against Ukraine continued, Russian authorities began reaching out to employers, providing them with draft summons to deliver to particular workers. While some migrant workers have reportedly enlisted in order to receive citizenship after a “fast-track” decree was signed in September 2022, others have reportedly been manipulated into participating, as have prisoners. Individuals who do join report having to acquire their own supplies and going without promised payments.

Score Change: The score declined from 2 to 1 because prisoners and migrant workers are forced or coerced into military service, and because military recruits and draftees are forced to acquire supplies at their own expense and have not received promised pay.



On Russia

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Country Facts

Global Freedom Score

16/100 **Not Free**

Internet Freedom Score

23/100 **Not Free**

Other Years

2022

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