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RUSSIA

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN INFORMATION (COI) REPORT

COI Service

Date 11 November 2010

SECURING OUR BORDER CONTROLLING MIGRATION

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Preface

- i This Country of Origin Information (COI) Report has been produced by the COI Service, United Kingdom Border Agency (UKBA), for use by officials involved in the asylum/human rights determination process. The Report provides general background information about the issues most commonly raised in asylum/human rights claims made in the United Kingdom. The main body of the report includes information available up to 31 October 2010. The report was issued on 11 November 2010.
- ii The Report is compiled wholly from material produced by a wide range of recognised external information sources and does not contain any UKBA opinion or policy. All information in the Report is attributed, throughout the text, to the original source material, which is made available to those working in the asylum/human rights determination process.
- iii The Report aims to provide a compilation of extracts from the source material identified, focusing on the main issues raised in asylum and human rights applications. In some sections where the topics covered arise infrequently in asylum/human rights claims only web links are provided. The Report is not intended to be a detailed or comprehensive survey. For a more detailed account, the relevant source documents should be examined directly.
- iv The structure and format of the COI Report reflects the way it is used by UKBA decision makers and appeals presenting officers, who require quick electronic access to information on specific issues and use the contents page to go directly to the subject required. Key issues are usually covered in some depth within a dedicated section, but may also be referred to briefly in several other sections. Some repetition is therefore inherent in the structure of the Report.
- v The information included in this COI Report is limited to that which can be identified from source documents. While every effort is made to cover all relevant aspects of a particular topic, it is not always possible to obtain the information concerned. For this reason, it is important to note that information included in the Report should not be taken to imply anything beyond what is actually stated. For example, if it is stated that a particular law has been passed, this should not be taken to imply that it has been effectively implemented unless stated. Similarly, the absence of information does not necessarily mean that a particular event or action, amongst other things, did or does not occur.
- vi As noted above, the Report is a compilation of extracts produced by a number of reliable information sources. In compiling the Report, no attempt has been made to resolve discrepancies between information provided in different source documents though COIS will bring the discrepancies together and aim to provide a range of sources, where available, to ensure that a balanced picture is presented. For example, different source documents often contain different versions of names and spellings of individuals, places and political parties, etc. COI Reports do not aim to bring consistency of spelling, but to reflect faithfully the spellings used in the original source documents. Similarly, figures given in different source documents sometimes vary and these are simply quoted as per the original text. The term 'sic' has been used in this document only to denote incorrect spellings or typographical errors in quoted text; its use is not intended to imply any comment on the content of the material.

- vii The Report is based substantially upon source documents issued during the previous two years. However, some older source documents may have been included because they contain relevant information not available in more recent documents. All sources contain information considered relevant at the time this Report was issued.
- viii This COI Report and the accompanying source material are public documents. All COI Reports are published on the RDS section of the Home Office website and the great majority of the source material for the Report is readily available in the public domain. Where the source documents identified in the Report are available in electronic form, the relevant web link has been included, together with the date that the link was accessed. Copies of less accessible source documents, such as those provided by government offices or subscription services, are available from the COI Service upon request.
- ix COI Reports are published regularly on the top 30 asylum intake countries. Reports on countries outside the top 30 countries may also be published if there is a particular operational need. UKBA officials also have constant access to an information request service for specific enquiries.
- x In producing this COI Report, COI Service has sought to provide an accurate, balanced summary of the available source material. Any comments regarding this Report or suggestions for additional source material are very welcome and should be submitted to UKBA as below.

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INDEPENDENT ADVISORY GROUP ON COUNTRY INFORMATION

- xi The Independent Advisory Group on Country Information (IAGCI) was set up in March 2009 by the Chief Inspector of the UK Border Agency to make recommendations to him about the content of the UKBA's COI material. The IAGCI welcomes feedback on UKBA's COI Reports and other country of origin information material. Information about the IAGCI's work can be found on the Chief Inspector's website at <http://www.ociukba.homeoffice.gov.uk>
- xii In the course of its work, the IAGCI reviews the content of selected UKBA COI documents and makes recommendations specific to those documents and of a more general nature. A list of the COI Reports and other documents which have been reviewed by the IAGCI or the Advisory Panel on Country Information (the independent organisation which monitored UKBA's COI material from September 2003 to October 2008) is available at <http://www.ociukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/>
- xiii Please note: it is not the function of the IAGCI to endorse any UKBA material or procedures. Some of the material examined by the Group relates to countries designated or proposed for designation to the Non-Suspensive Appeals (NSA) list. In such cases, the Group's work should not be taken to imply any endorsement of the

decision or proposal to designate a particular country for NSA, nor of the NSA process itself.

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Background Information

1. GEOGRAPHY

- 1.01 The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) in its Country Profile on Russia, dated 6 May 2010 recorded that:

“Russia is the largest country in the world, spanning 11 time zones. The landscape varies widely, from vast open tracts in the European heartlands and the taiga and tundra of Siberia, to mountainous terrain. Agriculture is largely confined to the European regions and the southern belt of Siberia. Further north, the main industries are forestry and extraction of energy and minerals.

“The main communications across the country are by air, and the Trans-Siberian railway. The road system is not well developed countrywide. Russia's great rivers also play an important part in transportation as well as in hydroelectric power generation.

“Russia's population is small relative to its size, and unevenly distributed, with the vast bulk in the European areas and the Ural regions. In inhospitable regions, e.g. the far north and much of Siberia, population density is often less than one person per square kilometre.” [1a]

- 1.02 Europa World online noted, in information retrieved on 13 September 2010, that:

“The Russian Federation, or Russia, constituted the major part of the USSR, providing some 76% of its area and approximately 51% of its population in 1989. It is bounded by Norway, Finland, Estonia and Latvia to the north-west and by Belarus and Ukraine to the west. The southern borders of European Russia are with the Black Sea, Georgia, Azerbaijan, the Caspian Sea and Kazakhstan. The Siberian and Far Eastern regions have southern frontiers with the People's Republic of China, Mongolia and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The eastern coastline is on the Sea of Japan, the Sea of Okhotsk, the Pacific Ocean and the Barents Sea, and the northern coastline is on the Arctic Ocean. The region around Kaliningrad (formerly Königsberg in East Prussia), on the Baltic Sea, became part of the Russian Federation in 1945. Separated from the rest of Russia by Lithuania and Belarus, it borders Poland to the south, Lithuania to the north and east, and has a coastline on the Baltic Sea. ... The official language is Russian, but many other languages are also used. Christianity is the major religion, with the Russian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate) the largest denomination. The main concentrations of adherents of Islam are among the Tatar, Bashkir and Chuvash peoples of the middle Volga, and the peoples of the northern Caucasus, including the Chechen, Ingush, Kabardins and the peoples of Dagestan. Buddhism is the main religion of the Buryats, the Tyvans and the Kalmyks. The large pre-1917 Jewish population has been depleted by war and emigration, but some 230,000 Jews remained in the Russian Federation in 2002, according to census results. The national flag (proportions 2 by 3) consists of three equal horizontal stripes of (from top to bottom) white, blue and red. The capital is Moscow (Moskva).” [2a]

See also [Freedom of religion](#)

See also [Ethnic groups](#)

MAP

- 1.03 Map showing the main cities and towns of Russia. ([United Nations Cartographic Section](#): Map no. 3840 ref.2, dated January 2004).



For further maps of Russia, see [Relief Web's Map Centre](#) , European Country of Origin Information Network ([ecoi.net](#)) and Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre ([IDMC](#)).

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2. ECONOMY

- 2.01 The CIA World Factbook, updated on 24 June 2010, recorded that:

“Russia has undergone significant changes since the collapse of the Soviet Union, moving from a globally-isolated, centrally-planned economy to a more market-based and globally-integrated economy. Economic reforms in the 1990s privatized most industry, with notable exceptions in the energy and defense-related sectors. Nonetheless, the rapid privatization process, including a much criticized 'loans-for-

shares' scheme that turned over major state-owned firms to politically-connected 'oligarchs', has left equity ownership highly concentrated. The protection of property rights is still weak and the private sector remains subject to heavy state interference. Russian industry is primarily split between globally-competitive commodity producers - in 2009 Russia was the world's largest exporter of natural gas, the second largest exporter of oil, and the third largest exporter of steel and primary aluminum - and other less competitive heavy industries that remain dependent on the Russian domestic market. This reliance on commodity exports makes Russia vulnerable to boom and bust cycles that follow the highly volatile swings in global commodity prices. The government since 2007 has embarked on an ambitious program to reduce this dependency and build up the country's high technology sectors, but with few results so far. A revival of Russian agriculture in recent years has led to Russia shifting from being a net grain importer to a net grain exporter. The economy had averaged 7% growth since the 1998 Russian financial crisis, resulting in a doubling of real disposable incomes and the emergence of a middle class. The Russian economy, however, was one of the hardest hit by the 2008-09 global economic crisis as oil prices plummeted and the foreign credits that Russian banks and firms relied on dried up. The Central Bank of Russia spent one-third of its \$600 billion international reserves, the world's third largest, in late 2008 to slow the devaluation of the ruble. The government also devoted \$200 billion in a rescue plan to increase liquidity in the banking sector and aid Russian firms unable to roll over large foreign debts coming due. The economic decline appears to have bottomed out in mid-2009 and by the second half of the year there were signs that the economy was growing, albeit slowly. Long-term challenges include a shrinking workforce, a high level of corruption, and poor infrastructure in need of large capital investment." [3a]

2.02 The FCO in its Country Profile on Russia, dated 6 May 2010 recorded that:

"The government implemented anti-crisis measures focused on three areas: maintaining the currency, preventing a banking collapse and ensuring social stability. To date, these stabilisation tactics have been successful but costly. Russia recorded positive growth for the last quarter of 2009, officially putting it out of recession. For 2010, the Government are projecting a growth in GDP of around 3% that would result in a budget deficit of \$100bn, or 7.5% of GDP. The current budget is calculated with an average oil price of \$59 per barrel." [1a]

2.03 As noted by the same source "The value of the Russian rouble is closely aligned to the oil price and so has also dropped since the summer of 2008. From mid-November the Russian Central Bank began a managed devaluation of the rouble. By 22 January 2009 the rouble had lost more than 30% of its value against the bi-currency basket (dollar and euro). Since that time a hike in oil prices and a renewed inflow of foreign capital has seen the rouble strengthen from its record low in March." [1a] The exchange rate as of 13 September 2010 was £1 Sterling (GBP) = 47.46 Russian Roubles (RUB). (OANDA Currency Converter) [4]

See also The European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies: [*Economic Consequences of Non-communicable Diseases and Injuries in the Russian Federation, 2007*](#) [21b]

3. HISTORY

The section provides a brief history of Russia. More detailed information on Russia's history can be found on The Federal Research Program of the Library of Congress: [A Country Study: Russia](#) [8a]

- 3.01 The Foreign and Commonwealth Office Country Profile on Russia (6 May 2010 version) stated that:

"The origins of the Russian state can be traced back to the sixteenth century when the trading principality of Muscovy emerged as the dominant player among a number of small principalities and fiefdoms. Ivan IV (Ivan the Terrible, 1533-1584) was the first prince of Muscovy to style himself as Tsar. The Romanov family emerged as Russia's leaders in the early 17th century, and ruled Russia for the next 300 years. Perhaps the best known of the Romanovs are Peter the Great (1682-1725) and Catherine the Great (1762-1796), who arguably did most to reform and modernise the country." [1a]

BOLSHEVIK REVOLUTION, 1903 - 1917

- 3.02 "By the early 20th century, discontent at all levels of Russian society was high. Harsh working conditions in the newly industrialised cities, coupled with an absolutist monarchy which was perceived as being indifferent to the suffering of the mass of the population, created conditions which were ripe for the growth of political radicalism. In 1903 a schism in the Russian Social Democrats led to the emergence of the Bolshevik Party, led by Lenin, which was inspired by an extremist interpretation of certain European models of socialism. Dissatisfaction grew following the Bloody Sunday Massacre in 1905, defeat in the Russo-Japanese War and the disastrous course of Russia's involvement in the First World War. By 1917 the Bolsheviks were in a position to seize political control from the recently installed Provisional Government in an opportunistic and fairly bloodless coup. The following year, Russia withdrew early from the First World War with the costly Treaty of Brest-Litovsk. Tsar Nikolai II and his family were shot." [1a]

SOVIET UNION, 1917 - 1991

- 3.03 "The early years of Lenin's rule were marked by civil war and mass starvation. Later, there was considerable rivalry for power as Lenin became increasingly incapacitated. Stalin emerged as the undisputed leader of the Communist Party in 1929. Once in place, his leadership came to be characterised by the use of political purges, mass deportation and imprisonment on an unprecedented scale as means of control. Stalin's Five Year Plans did, however, see rapid industrialisation. In June 1941 Germany invaded the USSR, triggering a four year war during which up to 27 million Soviet citizens died. Yet Russia emerged from the war victorious and having secured effective political control over most of Eastern Europe. Stalin remained firmly in control until his death in 1953, although he became increasingly paranoid and reclusive. During this period the Communist Party consolidated its hold on every aspect of life by means of a vast security apparatus. The USSR had become an industrial and military superpower, although at an immense human cost." [1a]
- 3.04 "Khrushchev, Stalin's successor, made some efforts to address the worst excesses of Stalin's rule, while preserving the key elements of Communism. He eased censorship and fostered a foreign policy of peaceful co-existence with the West, while, in the Hungarian Uprising of 1956, maintaining strong control over the Soviet satellite states.

But the Party establishment distrusted him and he lost further credibility over his handling of the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis. He was deposed in 1964 in a political coup. Brezhnev, his successor, presided over a period of consolidation. Life became more predictable and comfortable for the bulk of the population. However, with growth rates steadily declining and social problems growing, it became known as 'the period of stagnation.' From 1979 the Soviet Union became involved in a prolonged and bloody occupation of Afghanistan which scarred a whole generation." [1a]

Government of Mikhail Gorbachev, 1985 - 1991

- 3.05 "The stagnation of the Brezhnev era was continued by a quick succession of short-lived Party leaders who died in office. It was not until the mid-1980s, when Mikhail Gorbachev took power, that reform took off. Perestroika (restructuring) and glasnost (openness) liberalised both the economy and the political system. Gorbachev's goal was to build a better form of socialism. Gradually, however, the process of democratisation took on a pace of its own. Gorbachev made it clear that he would not intervene in the internal affairs of the Eastern European satellite states, which prompted widespread protest movements that brought about the collapse of unpopular communist governments which had previously relied on the threat of Soviet military support. At the same time, pressure was growing among some of the republics of the USSR for greater independence, and in 1990 the Russia republic within the USSR (headed by Boris Yeltsin) declared its independence in a symbolic gesture. In August 1991, a coup was mounted against Gorbachev by a group of hard-liners seeking to stop the fragmentation of the USSR. Yeltsin supported Gorbachev and the coup was defeated. But when Gorbachev returned to Moscow from the south where he had been under house arrest, it became clear that Yeltsin held the political initiative, and many of the republics of the USSR hastened to declare their independence. The dissolution of the USSR on 31 December 1991 left Gorbachev with no option but to resign as its President." [1a]

GOVERNMENT OF BORIS YELTSIN, 1991 - 1999

- 3.06 "President Yeltsin launched an agenda for Russia's transition to a democratic, market-based form of government. In 1992, Acting Prime Minister Yegor Gaidar began a programme of radical economic reforms, known as 'shock therapy', such as measures to cut subsidies and de-regulate prices. These quickly ran into stiff opposition, and change was as a result much more gradual and patchy than many had hoped. The exception was the field of privatisation where huge strides forward were taken between 1992 and 1994 to create the bases of a privately owned economic system. Russia was hamstrung by a constitutional crisis in 1992 and 1993, with Yeltsin contesting power with the Russian Parliament. In September 1993 Yeltsin finally sought to break the impasse, dissolving the Parliament and calling for fresh elections. When Parliamentary supporters took to the streets in violent protest, Yeltsin famously ordered tanks to fire on the White House, which broke the deadlock but left deep political scars." [1a]
- 3.07 "Out of that debacle a new Constitution and political institutions emerged. The period between 1993 and 1996 was, however, marked by political instability, war in Chechnya and continuing economic difficulties. By 1996 Yeltsin's popularity ratings were in single figures. He was re-elected that year when the Russian Establishment combined only to prevent a return of the Communists to power. His second term was crippled by severe economic problems, which in August 1998 culminated in the formal devaluation of the rouble and a decision to default on its rouble debts. A rapid turnover of Prime Ministers illustrated Yeltsin's increasingly desperate attempts to find a candidate he thought

suitable to replace him. He installed Vladimir Putin as Prime Minister in the summer of 1999 and resigned on 31 December 1999, before the official end of his presidential term.” [1a]

GOVERNMENT OF VLADIMIR PUTIN, 1999 – 2008

- 3.08 The United States State Department Background Note on Russia (14 June 2010 version) stated:

“On December 31, 1999 Boris Yeltsin resigned, and Vladimir Putin was named Acting President. In March 2000, he won election in his own right as Russia's second president with 53% of the vote. Putin moved quickly to reassert Moscow's control over the regions, whose governors had confidently ignored edicts from Boris Yeltsin. He sent his own "plenipotentiary representatives" (commonly called 'polpred' in Russian) to ensure that Moscow's policies were followed in recalcitrant regions and republics. He won enactment of liberal economic reforms that rescued a faltering economy and stopped a spiral of hyperinflation. Putin achieved wide popularity by stabilizing the government, especially in marked contrast to what many Russians saw as the chaos of the latter Yeltsin years. The economy grew both because of rising oil prices and in part because Putin was able to achieve reforms in banking, labor, and private property. During this time, Russia also moved closer to the U.S., especially after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. In 2002, the NATO-Russia Council was established, giving Russia a voice in NATO discussions.” [6a]

- 3.09 Jane's Sentinel Country Risk Assessment, Political leadership, updated 16 July 2010 stated that:

“He was re-elected for a second term in March 2004. Speculation that he would seek to change the constitution to allow him to stand for a third consecutive term in 2008 proved unfounded, but it still appears that he aims to retain significant authority. In December 2007, Putin was also elected to parliament on the United Russia party list and on 8 May 2008 he was appointed prime minister after handing over the presidency to Dmitry Medvedev the previous day, although in November 2009 he said that he was considering standing for the presidency in 2012.” [7a]

GOVERNMENT OF DMITRII MEDVEDEV, 2008 TO DATE

- 3.10 Europa World (accessed on 22 September 2010) stated that:

“In May 2008, following an election in March, Dmitrii Medvedev became federal President, succeeding Vladimir Putin, on the expiry of his second term in office. Medvedev's nomination of Putin as Chairman of the Government was subsequently approved by an overwhelming parliamentary majority.” [2a]

- 3.11 Jane's Sentinel Country Risk Assessment, Internal Affairs, updated 16 July 2010 stated that:

“Like Putin, Medvedev is a St Petersburg University graduate. He taught law at the university until 1999, and then was appointed by Putin as chief of the cabinet's staff. In 2000 Medvedev became deputy chief of Putin's staff, and in 2001 he was also appointed as a board of directors' chairman of Russian state-owned energy giant Gazprom. Medvedev is believed to be a liberal-minded and efficient administrator in favour of free-market policies advocated by Putin's economic adviser Igor Illarionov. “Other prominent members of the so-called St Petersburg group were promoted; Putin

described new appointees on his staff as "people of liberal, democratic views, committed to the development of democracy and a free market economy in Russia.

"In power, while Medvedev has spoken often in more reformist and conciliatory terms than Putin, as of mid-2010 he had yet to demonstrate any fundamental differences of opinion with his prime minister and patron." [7b]

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4. RECENT DEVELOPMENTS (JUNE 2010 - OCTOBER 2010)

4.01 The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), in an article dated 28/09/10, stated that:

"Russia's president, Dmitry Medvedev, has dismissed the powerful mayor of Moscow, Yuri Luzhkov. This was preceded by a coordinated media attack on Mr Luzhkov that was seemingly triggered by indications that the Moscow mayor was seeking to divide Mr Medvedev and his mentor and Prime Minister, Vladimir Putin. The dismissal marks a watershed in Mr Medvedev's presidency and could have extensive ramifications. Management of Moscow, with its 7.5m voters, is vital for the conduct of national elections due in 2011-12; it is also highly lucrative.

"High-profile and loyal politicians have so far been suggested as the most likely candidates to replace Mr Luzhkov: Sergei Sobyenin, a deputy prime minister who served in the presidential administration under Mr Putin; Igor Shuvalov, another deputy prime minister; and Sergei Shoigu, the perennially popular emergency-situations minister. With important elections approaching, adding to the imperative that Moscow is run properly, great care will be taken over the appointment of a new mayor." [15a]

4.02 The EIU, in its October 2010 monthly highlights, reported that:

"Although signs have emerged of some tensions and policy differences between the president, Dmitry Medvedev, and the prime minister, Vladimir Putin, an open and destabilising split between the two is unlikely.

"Approval ratings for both are high, despite the hardship inflicted by the economic crisis. The effect of such crises on social stability usually occurs with a lag, but it is doubtful that discontent could threaten the leadership.

"The poor official response to the wildfires in the summer highlighted the failure of the country's political system, but there is little prospect of the grip on power of the ruling 'tandem' being challenged." [15b]

TERRORIST THREAT

4.03 Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment - Russia and The CIS dated 16 July 2010 stated that: [2a]

"The terrorist threat to Russia is focused on the various radical Islamist groups based in the North Caucasus. The killing of ex-rebel president of Chechnya Aslan Maskhadov in 2005 and the death of notorious terrorist leader Shamil Basayev in July 2006 seemed to represent the end for the organised insurgency in Chechnya. Yet, although military operations in Chechnya officially ended in April 2009, Russian military forces and the pro-Moscow law enforcement agencies there still face regular attacks by insurgents. ...

The Chechen conflict also played a key role in sparking organised insurgency in neighbouring republics such as Ingushetia and Dagestan, but was able to do so because they were already in crisis as a result of regional economic decline, corruption, ethnic tensions and political alienation. A new generation of local militant groups have undertaken a growing number of attacks there since 2007, primarily against local officials and the security forces. These became increasingly effective from 2009, as seen with the assassination of the Dagestani minister of the interior and the serious wounding of the president of Ingushetia, as the various regional groups, under the loose banner of the Caucasus Emirate, show signs of becoming increasingly interlinked....' the threat continued as evidenced by ... 'the bombing of a Moscow-St Petersburg commuter train in November 2009 and a double suicide-bomb attack on the Moscow Metro in March 2010.' [7d] (Terrorism and Separatism)

See also [Political affiliation](#); [Political system](#); [Security situation](#) and [Internally displaced persons \(IDPs\)](#).

For further recent news reports on Russia, refer to the following Weblinks:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world/europe/>

<http://uk.reuters.com/places/russia>

<http://english.pravda.ru/>

<http://www.themoscowtimes.com/index.php>

<http://www.einnews.com/russia/>

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/russia/>

http://www.sussexineurope.org/news_russia.htm#Russia

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5. CONSTITUTION

- 5.01 According to a translation by the "Garant-Internet" legal processing website (accessed on 1 October 2010), "[The Constitution of the Russian Federation](#) [9a] (was Adopted at National Voting on December 12, 1993). The Constitution came into force on the day of its official publication. The text of the Constitution was published in Rossiiskaya Gazeta newspaper as of December 25, 1993." [9a] Under the Constitution of December 1993, the Russian Federation is a democratic, federative, multi-ethnic republic, in which state power is divided between the legislature, executive and judiciary, which are independent of one another. (Europa World online) [2a]

See also [Political system](#) and [Judiciary](#)

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6. POLITICAL SYSTEM

6.01 The United States State Department Background Note on Russia (14 June 2010 version) stated that:

“In the political system established by the 1993 constitution, the president wields considerable executive power. There is no vice president, and the legislative branch is far weaker than the executive. The bicameral legislature consists of the lower house (State Duma) and the upper house (the Federation Council). The president nominates the highest state officials, including the prime minister, who must be approved by the Duma. The president can pass decrees without consent from the Duma. He also is head of the armed forces and of the Security Council.

“The Russian constitution does not allow presidents to serve more than two consecutive terms. A December 2008 law extended the terms of Duma deputies from four to five years and presidential terms from four to six years. The new terms take effect with the next elections, which for the Duma are scheduled to occur in December 2011 and for President in March 2012.

“Russia is a federation, but the precise distribution of powers between the central government and the regional and local authorities is still evolving. The Russian Federation consists of 84 administrative units, including two federal cities, Moscow and St. Petersburg. The constitution explicitly defines the federal government's exclusive powers, but it also describes most key regional issues as the joint responsibility of the federal government and the regional administrative units. In 2000, President Putin grouped the regions into seven federal districts, with presidential appointees established in Moscow and six provincial capitals. In March 2004, the Constitution was amended to permit the merger of some regional administrative units. A law enacted in December 2004 eliminated the direct election of the country's regional leaders. Governors are now nominated by the president and subject to confirmation by regional legislatures.” [6a]

See also [Political affiliation](#) and [Constitution](#)

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Human Rights

7. INTRODUCTION

- 7.01 The US State Department *2009 Human Rights Report: Russia* (USSD Report 2009), published on 11 March 2010, stated:

“There were numerous reports of governmental and societal human rights problems and abuses during the year. Direct and indirect government interference in local and regional elections restricted the ability of citizens to change their government through free and fair elections. During the year there were a number of high profile killings of human rights activists by unknown persons, apparently for reasons related to their professional activities. There were numerous, credible reports that law enforcement personnel engaged in physical abuse of subjects. Prison conditions were harsh and could be life threatening. Corruption in law enforcement remained a serious problem, and many observers, including some judges and law enforcement personnel, asserted that the executive branch influenced judicial decisions in some high-profile cases. Security services and local authorities often conducted searches without court warrants. Government actions weakened freedom of expression and media independence, particularly of the major television networks. Eight journalists, many of whom reported critically on the government, were killed during the year; with one exception the government failed to identify, arrest, or prosecute any suspects. Beating and intimidation of journalists remained a problem. The government directed the editorial policies of government-owned media outlets, pressured major independent outlets to abstain from critical coverage, and harassed and intimidated journalists into practicing self-censorship. The government limited freedom of assembly, and police sometimes used violence to prevent groups from engaging in peaceful protest. In some regions the government limited freedom of association and restricted religious groups. There were instances of societal discrimination, harassment, and violence against religious minorities. Manifestations of anti-Semitism continued during the year, but the number of anti-Semitic attacks decreased. Corruption was widespread throughout the executive, legislative, and judicial branches at all levels, and officials often engaged in corrupt practices with impunity. The government restricted the activities of some nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), making it difficult for them to continue operations. Violence against women and children, including domestic violence, remained a significant problem. Trafficking in persons also continued to be a significant problem. There was some governmental and widespread societal discrimination against ethnic minorities and dark-skinned immigrants or guest workers. During the year xenophobic, racial, and ethnic attacks and hate crimes, particularly by skinheads, nationalists, and right-wing extremists, continued to be a significant problem. Instances of forced labor were reported.” [6b] (Introduction)

- 7.02 The Amnesty International Annual Report 2010, published on 27 May 2010, stated:

“Human rights defenders, lawyers and journalists were threatened and physically attacked; some were killed. A climate of impunity for these crimes prevailed, with police failing to investigate effectively. Human rights abuses were increasingly reported in the North Caucasus. In a number of cases, criminal suspects were allegedly subjected to torture and other ill-treatment to extract confessions. The Russian authorities failed to investigate fully human rights violations carried out by the armed forces in the August

2008 conflict with Georgia. Concerns continued about the failure to uphold fair trial standards. Government officials spoke out against racism, but racist attacks still took place on a regular basis. In November the Constitutional Court decided in favour of fully abolishing the death penalty.

“The government voiced its intention to fight corruption. In December, President Dmitry Medvedev ordered the reform of the Interior Ministry as a response to the public’s anger about police abuses. The Russian Federation’s human rights record was assessed under the [UN Universal Periodic Review in February](#) [25c] in February. Concerns were raised about the recent murders of journalists, the independence of the judiciary, extremism and hate crimes as well as the situation in the North Caucasus.” [14b]

7.03 The Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2010 report, published on 3 May 2010, stated:

“The executive branch maintained its tight controls on the media, civil society, and the other branches of government in 2009, and took additional steps to rein in religious and academic freedom. The large-scale disqualification of opposition candidates helped secure a sweeping victory for the ruling United Russia party in local and regional elections in October. In November, a dissident police officer faced punishment after drawing attention to widespread police corruption. Insurgent and other violence in the North Caucasus continued during the year, as did assassinations of prominent human rights activists and journalists.” [17a]

For specific human rights issues, see [Abuses by government forces](#); [Freedom of movement](#); [Freedom of speech and media](#); [Freedom of religion](#); [Freedom of political expression](#); [Freedom of association and assembly](#); [Prison conditions](#); [Disability](#); [Women and Children](#)

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8. SECURITY SITUATION

8.01 Jane’s Sentinel Security Assessment: Russia and The CIS, dated 16 July 2010, stated that in terms of State stability:

“Domestically, Vladimir Putin bequeathed his presidential successor Dmitry Medvedev a Russian Federation that is in many ways a much more stable and predictable country than during the Yeltsin era (1991-1999) with stronger government institutions and the fears of Russia’s immediate disintegration dispelled. Beneath the surface, though, there is a legacy of long-term problems, from a failure to reform the economy through to a severe demographic crisis, which are coming to the fore as a result of the economic slowdown that took hold from late 2008. ... The central problem of preserving Russia’s territorial integrity has been resolved by the centralisation of political power and the brutal repression of separatism in Chechnya, although long-term challenges to the Federation’s unity also remain, including weakened control over the Russian Far East, rising violence in the North Caucasus and growing violent nationalism against ethnic minorities across Russia.” [7d] (Security)

NORTH CAUCASUS

- 8.02 The International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) in its Armed Conflict Database stated that:

“Violence persists across the North Caucasus. The official 'end' of the second war in Chechnya in April 2009 failed to prevent an upsurge in attacks in Dagestan and Ingushetia afterwards. The surrounding republics of North Ossetia, Kabardino-Balkaria and Karachay-Cherkessia have not been immune. Armed resistance began in Chechnya after the Soviet Union's collapse, with the republic fighting two wars for independence from Moscow in 1994–1996 and from 1999 onwards. Since 2007, Chechnya has become more stable under Kremlin-backed President Ramzan Kadyrov, and active fighting had long ceased by the time Moscow ended its 'counter-terrorism regime' in 2009. But as fighters have fled Kadyrov's crackdown, the insurgency has again spilled over into the neighbouring republics – where political instability, soaring unemployment, rampant corruption, human-rights abuses by the security forces and traditional clan rivalries have fuelled the violence. Initially a secular conflict, the rebellion has taken on an increasingly Islamist nature in this Muslim region. Rebel leader Doku Umarov has proclaimed himself the 'emir' of a wished-for Islamic state or 'Caucasus emirate'. Russia considers Umarov one of its 'most wanted'. In January 2010, Russian President Dmitry Medvedev incorporated six North Caucasus republics into one federal district, and appointed an envoy to oversee it.” [5a]

Republics of Chechnya and Dagestan

- 8.03 “Desiring an independent Islamic state, militant groups in Russia's North Caucasus republics of Chechnya and Dagestan have coordinated a campaign against Russian federal government forces and representatives. The recent conflict can broadly be split into two periods, the 1994-96 Chechen conflict, and the present conflict which began in 1999. Moscow has allegedly resorted to repression and human-rights abuses in its efforts to control the Chechen population, and Chechen rebel groups have grown increasingly extreme in their tactics, alienating much of the local population, even while spreading the insurgency across the wider region. Since the 2007 installation of former rebel Ramzan Kadyrov as President of Chechnya, Moscow's 'Chechenisation' strategy in the conflict seems to have worked, as relative stability has been achieved in the capital, Grozny and in much of the mountainous countryside. However, Kadyrov's rule is far from representative, and resentment towards federally-supported authority simmers, despite the immense destruction witnessed in the region during the height of the conflict.” [5a]

Republics of Ingushetia and North Ossetia

- 8.04 “In the early 1990s, a territorial dispute broke out between North Ossetians and Ingush over the Prigorodny Oblast — a region located around the North Ossetian capital Vladikavkaz which borders Ingushetia. The Ingush, a group of internally displaced persons resettled under Stalin, have demanded to be allowed to return to the Oblast and have also demanded that it be reattached to Ingushetia. The Ossets have resisted these demands and ethnic unrest led to Ingush separatists seizing part of the oblast in late 1992. Russian peacekeepers were deployed to the region and their mediation has prevented mass violence. Although some 13,000 internally displaced persons have returned to the oblast, the resolution of the dispute chiefly depends on Moscow's role in finding a solution to the future of oblast. In recent years, violence in both republics has taken on a criminal and separatist character, as anti-Russian sentiment has grown, partly in response to Moscow's handling of the Prigorodny Oblast issue.” [5a]

- 8.05 The US State Department *2009 Human Rights Report: Russia* (USSD Report 2009), published on 11 March 2010, stated:

“The North Caucasus region of Russia remained an area of particular concern. The government's poor human rights record in the North Caucasus worsened, as the government fought insurgents, Islamist militants, and criminal forces. Local government and insurgent forces reportedly engaged in killing, torture, abuse, violence, politically motivated abductions, and other brutal or humiliating treatment, often with impunity. In Chechnya, Ingushetia, and Dagestan, the number of extrajudicial killings and disappearances increased markedly, as did the number of attacks on law enforcement personnel. Authorities in the North Caucasus appeared to act outside of federal government control. Although the Chechen government announced a formal end to counterterrorist operations, there was an increase in violence during the summer, which continued through the remainder of the year. Federal and local security forces in Chechnya, as well as the private militia of Chechen president Ramzan Kadyrov, allegedly targeted families of suspected insurgents for reprisal and committed other abuses. There were also reports of rebel involvement in bombing civilian targets and politically motivated disappearances in the region. Some rebels were allegedly involved in kidnapping for ransom. According to the Internet-based news agency Caucasian Knot, 342 members of law enforcement agencies lost their lives and 680 were injured during the year in actions involving insurgents. Thousands of internally displaced persons lived in temporary centers in the region that failed to meet international standards.” [6b] (Introduction)

See also *Amnesty International Annual Report 2010* [14b] and [*Human Rights Watch World Report 2010*](#). [22a]

FORMER SOVIET REPUBLICS/OBLASTS

- 8.06 The International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) in its Armed Conflict Database stated that:

Abkhazia

- 8.07 “Abkhazia declared itself independent in the early 1990s and has since been effectively self-governed. However, it was not until 2008 that another country formally recognised it as a state. Even now, Russia and a handful of others excepted, the international community continues to consider it as legitimately a Georgian region.” [5a]

South Ossetia

- 8.08 “Although physically separated from Russia by the high Caucasus Mountains, many South Ossetians feel a strong affinity with it culturally and politically. Their largely rural land declared its independence from Georgia in 1990, a year earlier than Abkhazia, but there is less perceived desire to go it alone entirely than in that other breakaway republic. ... The region is still internationally recognised as part of Georgia, which has offered it considerable autonomy. However, with Russian assistance its affairs have essentially been run from the local capital, Tskhinvali ... Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili's determination to keep the disputed territory within his country saw further fighting in 2004 and 2008. In the latter conflict, Russia sent ... Its military ... into Georgia proper before withdrawing, and the war subtly altered the regional balance of power. While South Ossetia generally remains in diplomatic limbo, Moscow has ... used the opportunity to shore up its considerable influence there.” [5a]

Moldova: Transnistria

- 8.09 “The disputed status of the so-called Dniestr Republic/Transnistria has fuelled ethno-nationalist movements against control by the Moldovan government. With the break-up of the Soviet Union ... the Slav-dominated territory of Transnistria was quick to align itself with Russia. The volatile area was highly militarised and contained substantial criminal elements. Fighting broke out between pro-independence and Moldovan forces in 1992 but quickly subsided. Since then, the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) has overseen the gradual withdrawal of Russian military equipment and soldiers from Transnistria, a process which frequently stalls. Negotiations between Moldova and the republic are mediated by the Russian Federation, Ukraine and the OSCE but have yet to bring about a settlement of the dispute. The disputed territory is allegedly involved in illegal arms trafficking and other illicit activities. Tacit Russian support for the self-proclaimed Transnistrian leadership further complicates the situation.” [5a]

See also [History: Recent developments](#) and [Internally displaced persons \(IDPs\)](#).

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9. CRIME

ORGANISED CRIME

- 9.01 An article in the *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin*, May 2000 stated that:

“Although little debate exists among observers--even in Russia--that the problem of organized crime in Russia has become large and broad, the actual size and scope of ROC there remains uncertain. Reports of the number, size, and activities of organized-crime groups vary greatly. Much of the information, whether from news agencies or official sources, is often speculative, anecdotal, conflicting, or a combination thereof. Official Russian reports have estimated that 3,000 to 5,000 criminal groups exist in that country. ... Notwithstanding the lack of a reliable assessment of its constitution, ROC unquestionably causes extensive harm in Russia. This damage results partly from traditional crimes, such as extortion, drug trafficking, gambling, prostitution, and fraud schemes. More threatening, ROC, in concert with corrupt government officials and businessmen, has been plundering Russia's assets and moving billions of dollars out of the country.” [23a]

- 9.02 Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment: Russia and The CIS, dated 16 July 2010, stated that:

“The domestic organised crime situation in Russia has improved slightly in recent years, although law enforcement agencies are still weak, poorly funded and corrupt. Traditional organised crime groups in Russia remain strong; although they are less prone to the overt gangsterism, they still regularly use targeted murders of rivals, business people and officials. However, the economic crisis is forcing some gangs back into street crime as their business activities become less profitable. Russia has become a hub for transnational crime, in particular the trafficking of drugs and people, raising additional security concerns.” [7c] (security)

Further information on organised crime can be found at:

The Threat of Russian Organized Crime [39a]

Russian Organized Crime: Resources.

<http://conflicts.rem33.com/images/Russia/RUSSIAN%20ORGANIZED%20CRIME.htm>
[40a]

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10. SECURITY FORCES

POLICE

- 10.01 The US State Department *2009 Human Rights Report: Russia* (USSD Report 2009), published on 11 March 2010, stated:

“The Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Federal Security Service, and the Office of the Prosecutor General are responsible for law enforcement at all levels of government. The Federal Security Service's core responsibilities are security, counterintelligence, and counterterrorism, but it also has broader law enforcement functions, including fighting crime and corruption. The Federal Security Service operated with little oversight by the prosecutor general or the courts.

“The national police force, under the Ministry of Internal Affairs, is organized at the federal, regional, and local levels. Although there are laws and regulations against corruption, corruption was widespread, and there were few crackdowns on illegal police activity.

“During the first nine months of the year, according to the investigative branch of the Office of the Chief Prosecutor, the number of cases opened against law enforcement officials for abuse of their positions increased over the same period in 2008. In November Novorossiysk Ministry of Internal Affairs Major Aleksey Dymovskiy made a video request to Prime Minister Putin to address widespread corruption among law enforcement officers. Authorities did not investigate Dymovskiy's allegations, and he was later charged with abuse of office and fraud.” [6b] (section 1d)

- 10.02 Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment: Russia and The CIS dated 16 July 2010 stated that:

“The Russian police force, the militsiya, is structured along Soviet lines. Police units report to the regional (oblast or republic) Internal Affairs Directorates (Upravlenie vnutrennikh del: UVDs). The UVDs are notionally subordinated to the republic-level offices of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (Ministerstvo vnutrennikh del: MVD) where appropriate and then to the central MVD in Moscow. However, the UVDs are jointly financed by federal and local authorities and therefore tend to be dominated by regional governors. Regional police commands have at their disposal two types of paramilitary forces: the Special Designation Police Detachments (Otryad militsii osobennogo naznacheniya: OMON) and the Special Rapid Response Detachments (Spetsialnye Otryady Bystrogo Reagirovaniya: SOBR). The OMON is a riot-control force, while the SOBR is a SWAT (Special Weapons and Techniques) commando-type force. Both forces have seen combat service in Chechnya and other areas of the North Caucasus. These forces are also available for hire to private companies to provide security services.

“The Russian police force is underpaid and overworked and has found it difficult to cope with combating organised crime and gang warfare. It also suffers from high levels of corruption. As a result, it has become increasingly paramilitary in its methods and weaponry.” [7e] (Security and foreign forces)

See also [Abuses by government forces](#)

ARMED FORCES

- 10.03 Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment: Russia and The CIS, dated 16 July 2010, stated that the Russian armed forces had an active personnel of 589,000 comprising Army 319,000, Air Force 124,000 and Navy 146,000 with estimated reserves of 2,000,000, comprising 1,105,000, 420,000, and 475,000 respectively. [7f] (Armed forces)

The report continued:

“Operational effectiveness, while improving, is still relatively low. There has been some progress in bringing the real strength of units up to their formal, 'establishment' strength ... Earlier promises to end conscription have had to be shelved and while draftees now serve only one year, there is still great resistance to the draft, not least because of the continuing conflict in the North Caucasus.” [7f] (Armed forces)

The specialist website warfare.ru [41] provides a comprehensive database of Russian military capability.

See also [Military service](#)

OTHER GOVERNMENT FORCES

- 10.04 There are a number of units which fall into this category. For example: The Ministry Of Internal Affairs Police Force, Drug Control Agency, MVD Interior Troops, Federal Protection Service (Federalnaya Sluzhba Okhrana: FSO), Special Forces and the Federal Security Service (Federalnaya sluzhba Bezopasnosti: FSB). [7h] (Security and Foreign Forces)

See the following links for further information on the above topic.

- 10.05 Axis Information and Analysis (AIA) - Russian Security Services
<http://www.axisglobe.com/article.asp?article=215> [42a]

GlobalSecurity.org - Federal Security Service (FSB)
<http://www.globalsecurity.org/intell/world/russia/fsb.htm> [43a]

See also the [Child Soldiers Global Report 2008](#) [16a]

ABUSES BY GOVERNMENT FORCES

- 10.06 The USSD Report 2009 stated that:

“Human rights observers continued to allege that officers in the special services abused their positions by gathering compromising materials on public figures. Regional branches of the Federal Security Service reportedly continued to exert pressure on citizens employed by foreign firms and organizations, often to coerce them into becoming informants.

“According to an HRW report detailing abuses by parties to the August 2008 conflict between Russia and Georgia, Russian forces were at times involved in looting and destruction, either as passive witnesses to abuses by Ossetian militias or providers of transport that enabled the militias to engage in such activities.

“During the year complex and interlocking insurgencies caused continuing instability in the North Caucasus, with a marked upsurge in incidents committed by government and insurgent forces during the year. Overall, there were increases in disappearances, killings, and other abuses. There were reports that federal and local security forces seeking to quell the insurgencies continued to use excessive force and to engage in human rights abuses, including torture, summary executions, disappearances, and arbitrary detentions. Authorities in the North Caucasus reportedly acted with impunity, and some observers alleged that the federal government had ceded de facto control of the region to local authorities. Rebels also continued to commit human rights abuses, including major acts of terrorism and summary executions. [6b] (Section 1g)

10.07 The same source further noted:

“An Human Rights Report (HRW) report released in September concluded that the central government had failed to act on any of the ECHR [European Convention of Human Rights] rulings that called on it to investigate specific human rights violations in Chechnya.

“Indiscriminate use of force by government forces in areas of the North Caucasus with significant civilian populations resulted in numerous deaths. Security forces generally conducted their activities with disregard for due process, civilian casualties, and apparent impunity from investigation or prosecution for their conduct. Human rights organizations reported that there were more killings, attacks, and abductions of both officials and other citizens in Ingushetiya during the year than in any other republic in the North Caucasus.” [6b] (Section 1g)

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11. MILITARY SERVICE

11.01 The Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers *Global Report 2008*, published on 20 May 2008, stated:

“Conscription remained a universal obligation for men aged 18–27, and for women with a military proficiency qualification. In 2006 the government introduced an amendment to the Law on Military Obligations and Military Service to shorten the duration of military service. In 2007 the length of service was cut from 24 months to 18 and to one year for conscripts with a higher education. In 2008 all conscripts, regardless of educational background, would do one year’s service. The law cancelled occupational deferrals and repealed provisions for the drafting of reservists. Alternative service for conscientious objectors remained at 1.75 times the length of conscription, 1.5 times for those willing to do civilian jobs in the military.

“The logistics of conscription were basically unchanged. Military registers throughout the country enrolled all 17-year-olds. Under the Law on Military Obligations and Military

Service, active duty for conscripts began when they were 18 (Articles 8 and 22). Conscientious objectors had to apply for alternative service at the earliest stage of the conscription process, when they were only 16 or 17. Later requests were inadmissible.” [16a]

See also [Armed forces](#)

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12. ABUSES BY NON-GOVERNMENT ARMED FORCES

12.01 Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment: Russia and The CIS, last updated 14 October 2010, stated that:

“Increasingly, the focus of non-state armed operations in Russia is shifting from Chechnya and towards other North Caucasus republics, especially Dagestan and Ingushetia. The rising violence across the North Caucasus more widely adds credibility to the claim that the region's various militant groups have been re-organised and are now co-ordinating with each other as a unified Islamist insurgency.

“In April 2009, the Russian government formally announced the end to the counter-terrorist operation in Chechnya. To an extent, this was only a political statement and violence continues, but it does reflect the extent to which the back of Chechen resistance has been broken by the activities of the federal forces and in particular those of Chechen President Ramzan Kadyrov. Many active rebel commanders within Chechnya have been captured or killed and while the remaining rebels retain the capability to conduct attacks both in Chechnya and the Russian Federation in general, they are only a shadow of their former selves. A much more serious threat is now posed by militants elsewhere in the North Caucasus, which are an increasingly centralised network of autonomous cells working within broad strategic directions.

“Violence has risen sharply since 2007, with the quantity of attacks being matched by their scale. Alongside the regular killing of security service personnel and local government officials in the North Caucasus, occasional large-scale attacks have also been undertaken such as the assassination of Dagestan's minister of the interior in June 2009, the serious wounding of Ingush president Yunus-bek Yevkurov also in June 2009 and a major suicide bomb attack at a police headquarters in the city of Nazran, Ingushetia in August 2009. The insurgents have also sought to strike at targets beyond the North Caucasus and claimed attacks that derailed a high-speed train between St Petersburg and Moscow in November 2009 that left 28 people dead and a double suicide bombing on the Moscow Metro system in March 2010 that left 40 people dead.” [7f] (Non state armed groups)

See also the [Child Soldiers Global Report 2008](#) [16a]

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13. JUDICIARY

ORGANISATION

13.01 The US State Department *2009 Human Rights Report: Russia* (USSD Report 2009), published on 11 March 2010, stated:

"The judiciary is divided into three branches. The courts of general jurisdiction, including military courts, are subordinate to the Supreme Court. They hear civil and criminal cases and include district courts, which serve every urban and rural district, and regional courts. Decisions of the lower trial courts can be appealed only to the immediately superior court unless a constitutional issue is involved. An arbitration (commercial) court system under the High Court of Arbitration constitutes a second branch of the judicial system. Arbitration courts hear cases involving business disputes between legal entities and between legal entities and the state. The Federal Constitutional Court (as well as constitutional courts in a number of administrative entities) constitutes the third branch. Justices of the peace in localities deal with criminal cases involving maximum sentences of less than three years and with some civil cases. Justices of the peace work in all regions except Chechnya." [6b] (Section 1e)

INDEPENDENCE

13.02 The USSD Report 2009 stated:

"In May the State Duma passed a law proposed by President Medvedev that allows him to appoint the head, deputy head, and court secretary of the Constitutional Court directly and that extends these officials' terms in office from three to six years. Judicial experts stated that the law contradicts the principle of judicial independence. ... In November the human rights ombudsman reported that most of the complaints that his office received in the previous year involved alleged violations of human rights during criminal court proceedings. In December, two Constitutional Court judges resigned in protest over what they stated was the justice system's lack of judicial independence." [6b] (Section 1e)

FAIR TRIAL

13.03 The USSD Report 2009 stated:

"Trials typically are conducted before a judge without a jury (bench trials). The defendant is presumed innocent. The defense is not required to present evidence and is given an opportunity to cross-examine witnesses and call defense witnesses. Defendants who are in custody during the trial are confined to a caged area and must consult with their attorneys through the bars. Defendants have the right of appeal. The law provides for the use of jury trials for a limited category of "especially grave" crimes, such as murder, in higher-level regional courts.

"During the year the ECHR on multiple occasions found the country in violation of provisions of the European Convention on Human Rights with regard to trial procedures. In 2008, the latest year for which statistics were available, the court found 159 violations by the country involving the right to a fair trial and 20 violations involving proceedings that exceeded a "reasonable" length of time. There has been a trend to further limit the use of jury trials." [6b] (Section 1e)

13.04 The USSD Report 2009 continued:

"The government substantially increased the use of plea bargaining in criminal cases ... Plea bargains reduced defendants' time in pretrial detention, reduced the average prison sentence by one third, and allowed the courts and prosecutors to devote their resources to other cases. Some critics of law enforcement practices expressed fears that plea bargaining is subject to abuse by the authorities... According to the NGO

Independent Council of Legal Expertise, defense lawyers were the targets of police harassment. Professional associations at federal and local levels reported efforts by police to intimidate attorneys and cover up their own criminal activities.” [6b] (Section 1e)

See also the [Constitution](#); the [Criminal Code](#) of the Russian Federation; the [Criminal Procedural Code](#) of the Russian Federation and the [Civil Code](#) of the Russian Federation for further information.

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14. ARREST AND DETENTION – LEGAL RIGHTS

14.01 The US State Department *2009 Human Rights Report: Russia* (USSD Report 2009), published on 11 March 2010, noted:

“The law prohibits arbitrary arrest and detention; however, in practice they remained problems ... By law an individual may be taken into custody for up to 48 hours without court approval if arrested at the scene of a crime, provided there is evidence of the crime or a witness. Otherwise a court-approved arrest warrant is required. After their arrest detainees are typically taken to the nearest police station, where they are informed of their rights. Police are required to write an official protocol stating the grounds for the detention, which is to be signed by the detainee and the police officer within three hours of detention. Police must interrogate the detainee within the first 24 hours of detention. Prior to interrogation the detainee has the right to meet with an attorney for two hours. No later than 12 hours after detention, police must notify the prosecutor. They must also notify the detainee's relatives unless a prosecutor issues a warrant to keep the detention secret.

“Police are required to release a detainee after 48 hours, subject to bail conditions, unless a court decides to prolong custody in response to a motion filed by police no later than eight hours before the expiration of the 48-hour detention period. The defendant and attorney must be present at the court hearing. By law police must complete their investigation and transfer the case file to a prosecutor for arraignment within two months of a suspect's arrest, although a court may extend a criminal investigation for up to six months in cases classified as complex. With the personal approval of the prosecutor general, a judge may extend that period up to 18 months.

“Legal limitations on detention were generally respected outside of the Northern Caucasus; however, there were exceptions.” [6b] (Section 1d)

See also [Security forces](#) and [Opposition groups and political activists](#)

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15. PRISON CONDITIONS

15.01 The USSD Report 2009 stated:

“Prison conditions remained extremely harsh and could be life threatening. The Ministry of Justice's Federal Service for the Execution of Sentences (FSIN) administered most of the penitentiary system from Moscow. According an official FSIN prison survey conducted in January, 887,500 persons were in custody, including 8,500 juveniles and

55,300 women. Of these, 734,300 were held in labor colonies and 144,700 in pretrial detention centers. Detainees were held in five basic forms of custody: temporary police detention centers; pretrial detention facilities (SIZOs); correctional labor colonies (ITKs); prisons, designated for those who violate ITK rules; and educational labor colonies (VTKs) for juveniles.

“Abuse of prisoners by other prisoners continued to be a problem. Violence among inmates, including beating and rape, was common. There were elaborate inmate-enforced caste systems in which certain groups, including informers, homosexuals, rapists, prison rape victims, and child molesters were considered ‘untouchable’ (the lowest caste) and treated harshly. Prison authorities provided little or no protection. In June opendemocracy.net reported on the existence of 12 special colonies in the Kirov Oblast, which it referred to as ‘torture colonies,’ where prisoners were sent for ‘bad behavior’ such as arguing with prison staff or demanding protection of their rights.” [6b] (Section 1c)

15.02 The *Earthtimes* online newspaper, in an article dated 6 January 2010, reported that:

“It has long been described as ‘hell on Earth,’ and now Russian President Dmitry Medvedev has pledged to reform it. That hell is Russia’s prison system. Human rights activists regularly accuse prison guards of brutally mistreating inmates. Russian Justice Minister Aleksandr Konovalov has even compared the “inhuman conditions” to the gulag, the forced-labour camp system under Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin so devastatingly portrayed, in ‘The Gulag Archipelago,’ by Nobel Prize in Literature laureate Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn (1918-2008). Overhauling this Soviet legacy, observers say, is the most difficult project undertaken to date by Medvedev, a lawyer by training.” [30a]

15.03 The *New York Times*, in an article dated 22 March 2010, stated that:

“In Russian prisons, the inmates are divided into barracks housing a hundred or so men without regard to the severity of their crimes. At night, a guard locks the door and walks away, leaving first-time offenders and people convicted of nonviolent crimes to fend for themselves in a crowd of gang members, hit men and other career criminals.... Beginning this year, however, first-time offenders may no longer have to live in fear. In the first major effort to upgrade a prison system that has changed little since Stalin established it more than 70 years ago, career criminals will be separated from the general prison population and housed in new prisons with cellblocks, rather than barracks ... Human rights groups praised the new approach, but given Russia’s recent track record on rights, they said they doubted whether it would be fully carried out. ‘Russian prisons are widely acknowledged to be troubled institutions with poor conditions, torture and ill treatment,’ said Allison Gill, director of Human Rights Watch in Russia.” [31a]

For information on Women’s prisons see [Women in Prison in Russia: At a Glance](#) [44a] and [International profile of women’s prisons](#) [45a]

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16. DEATH PENALTY

16.01 According to The Hands Off Cain website:

“On November 19, 2009, Russia’s Constitutional Court prolonged a moratorium on the death penalty, which was due to expire on January 1, 2010, until it is banned completely. “This decision is final and shall not be appealed,” court chairman Valery Zorkin said reading out the ruling. Zorkin said the moratorium on executions will be in place until Russian parliament ratifies Protocol 6 to the European Convention banning the death penalty. He said an ‘irreversible process to abolish capital punishment’ is going on in Russia, which is in line with its international commitments and global tendencies ... For his part, Prime Minister Vladimir Putin has repeatedly called for its abolition ...

“On March 23, 2010, Russian State Duma Speaker Boris Gryzlov said Russia has refrained from ratifying Protocol 6 to the European Convention on Human Rights that covers the abolition of the death penalty due to terrorist threats ... Forty-four per cent of Russians think capital punishment should be fully re-instated and applied, according to a Russian Public Opinion Research Centre poll made public on February 19, 2010. Eighteen per cent said the death penalty should be completely abolished, while 29 per cent would preserve the current moratorium.” [26a]

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17. POLITICAL AFFILIATION

FREEDOM OF POLITICAL EXPRESSION

- 17.01 The *Freedom in the World* 2010 report, published by Freedom House on 3 May 2010, stated:

“Russia is not an electoral democracy. The 2007 State Duma elections were carefully engineered by the administration, handing pro-Kremlin parties a supermajority in the lower house, which is powerless in practice. In the 2008 presidential election, state dominance of the media was on full display, debate was absent, and incumbent Vladimir Putin was able to pass the office to his handpicked successor, Dmitry Medvedev.

“Beginning with the 2007 elections, all Duma seats were elected on the basis of party-list proportional representation. Parties must gain at least 7 percent of the vote to enter the Duma. Furthermore, parties cannot form electoral coalitions, and would-be parties must have at least 50,000 members and organizations in half of the federation’s 83 administrative units to register. These changes, along with the tightly controlled media environment and the misuse of administrative resources, including the courts, make it extremely difficult for opposition parties to win representation.” [17a]

- 17.02 As documented by the US State Department *2009 Human Rights Report: Russia* (USSD Report 2009), published on 11 March 2010:

“The law provides citizens the right to change their government peacefully in regularly scheduled national and regional elections; however, citizens could not exercise this right in practice, as the government restricted political competition directly and indirectly by limiting the ability of opposition parties to organize, register candidates for public office, access the media, or conduct political campaigns.

“On March 1, [2009] elections were held for seats in the legislative bodies of nine Russian regions, 10 posts of mayor, and seats in the representative bodies of 12 administrative centers of the Russian regions. The independent election monitoring NGO GOLOS observed a number of irregularities in the elections, including: pressure on voters in Tatarstan, where workers ... were forced to report their voting to management; the presence of unauthorized groups at polling stations in St. Petersburg, Novosibirsk, and Chelyabinsk; and interference with election monitoring in Tatarstan, Dolgoprudny, and Tomsk. In St. Petersburg local Yabloko party representatives were prevented from registering more than half of their candidates. Some voters complained of unlawful materials in polling places, blackmail, and threats. In Volgograd voters alleged that electoral commissions recorded their votes using invisible ink that disappeared.” [6b] (Section 3)

FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION AND ASSEMBLY

17.03 The USSD Report 2009 noted:

“The law provides for freedom of association, and the government respected this right in many instances; however, there were a number of significant exceptions. Public organizations must register their bylaws and the names of their leaders with the Ministry of Justice. Several organizations were forced to suspend activities while registration was pending, and restrictions were applied in a discriminatory and selective manner to some NGOs, particularly those receiving foreign funding or involved in issues of political opposition or in human rights monitoring. In April the government enacted a law that reduced the number of signatures required to register a political party.” [6b] (Section 2)

17.04 As documented by the USSD Report 2009:

“The law provides for freedom of assembly, but local authorities increasingly restricted this right in practice. Permits are required for most types of public meetings, demonstrations, or marches and must be requested between five and 10 days before the event. Local elected and administrative officials selectively denied some groups permission to assemble or offered alternate venues that were inconveniently located. According to a representative from the Ministry of Internal Affairs, through April approximately 2,500 public rallies took place in the country, of which 140 were unsanctioned.” [6b] (Section 2)

17.05 The Freedom House, *Freedom in the World* 2010 report stated:

“The government has consistently reduced the space for freedoms of assembly and association. Overwhelming police responses and routine arrests have discouraged unsanctioned protests, though pro-Kremlin groups are able to demonstrate freely. A 2006 law imposed onerous new reporting requirements on NGOs, giving bureaucrats extensive discretion in deciding which organizations could register and hampering activities in subject areas that the state deemed objectionable. The law also places extensive controls on the use of foreign funds, and in July 2008 Putin lifted the tax-exempt status of most foreign foundations and NGOs. The state has sought to provide alternative sources of funding to local NGOs, including a handful of organizations that are critical of government policy, though such support generally limits the scope of the recipient groups’ activities. In 2009, Medvedev amended the NGO law to make it less burdensome, but overall conditions for civil society groups remain difficult. In a positive development, a St. Petersburg court ruled that a 2008 police search of the human rights

group Memorial's offices had been illegal, ordering the police to return confiscated computer hard drives." [17a]

OPPOSITION GROUPS AND POLITICAL ACTIVISTS

- 17.06 *World Affairs* a bimonthly international affairs journal, in an article dated 9 March 2010, stated that:

"The Russian Duma comprises four parties: Mr. Putin's United Russia (which controls 70 percent of seats) is joined by three 'opposition' groups that have passed through the filters of the justice ministry and the central electoral commission. The presence of these groups that occasionally oppose government initiatives (deputies from Fair Russia apparently voted against the 2010 budget after a personal request from Mr. Putin) is meant to distinguish Russia's legislature from its counterparts in North Korea or Turkmenistan. When it comes to issues sensitive to the Kremlin, however, the "parliamentary opposition" drops all pretenses, as was the case with the Duma's 447 to 0 vote to recognize the 'independence' of Abkhazia and South Ossetia – a decision not only contrary to international law, but dangerous as an example to Russia's own separatist-minded Caucasus regions.

"The real opposition in Russia does not sit in the rubber-stamp 'parliament' and has no access to state-controlled television. Its strength lies in the thousands of supporters willing to risk comfort and safety by openly protesting the authoritarian government. After the 12,000-strong anti-Putin rally in Kaliningrad in late January, the opposition held similar gatherings in Irkutsk, Archangel and Penza." [37a]

- 17.07 The *Freedom in the World* 2010 report stated:

"The tightly controlled October 2009 local and regional elections, which gave United Russia some 70 percent of the contested seats, provoked protests, including a short-lived walkout by other parties in the normally subservient Duma. Before the elections, the authorities had eliminated most of the opposition candidates by invalidating the signatures they had collected." [17a]

- 17.08 See the [USSD Human Rights Report 2009](#) for further information on the above topic. [6b] (Section 3)

See also [Arrest and detention – legal rights](#); [Prison conditions](#); [Freedom of speech and media](#); [Ethnic groups](#); [Exit and return](#) and [Annex B](#).

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18. FREEDOM OF SPEECH AND MEDIA

- 18.01 The US State Department *2009 Human Rights Report: Russia* (USSD Report 2009), published on 11 March 2010, stated:

"The constitution provides for freedom of speech and of the press; however, in practice government pressure on the media persisted, resulting in numerous infringements of these rights.

"While the government frequently respected citizens' rights to freedom of speech, it increasingly restricted this right, particularly with regard to issues such as the conduct of federal forces in Chechnya, human rights, corruption, and criticism of the government.

Some regional and local authorities took advantage of the judicial system's procedural weaknesses and overly broad laws to detain persons for expressing views critical of the government. With some exceptions, judges appeared unwilling to challenge powerful federal and local officials who sought to prosecute journalists. These proceedings on occasion resulted in high fines.

"The government used direct ownership or ownership by large private companies with links to the government to control or influence the major national media and a majority of the regional media outlets, especially television; many media organizations saw their autonomy weaken further. During the year the government used its leverage to restrict dissemination of information about issues deemed sensitive, including coverage of opposition political parties and candidates in local elections that were held in March and October, and economic problems. International observers criticized the unbalanced access to the media for candidates in the local elections as well as in nationwide elections in 2007 and 2008, noting that the overwhelming majority of prime-time television coverage--the primary source of information for the public--was devoted to United Russia candidates. Observers also noted numerous press freedom abuses, including harassment of media outlets, legislative limitations, lack of equal access to information, and arbitrary application of rules." [6b] (Section2)

- 18.02 Freedom House, in its report *Freedom of the Press – Russia 2010*, published 1 October 2010, stated that:

"Russian media freedom continued to decline in 2009, with the Kremlin relying on alternatively crude and sophisticated media management to distract the public from widespread corruption and the country's economic crisis. Most state and private media engaged in blatant propaganda that glorified the country's national leaders and fostered an image of political pluralism—claiming that President Dmitry Medvedev was leading the process of Russian modernization while Prime Minister Putin was working to maintain stability. ... Journalists remained unable to cover the news freely, particularly with regard to contentious topics like human rights abuses in the North Caucasus, government corruption, organized crime, police torture, the activities of opposition parties, and the country's economic crisis." [17b]

- 18.03 The Freedom House, *Freedom of the Press 2010* report continued:

"Russia remained one of the most dangerous countries in the world for the media due to widespread lawlessness that allows politicians, security agents, and criminals to silence journalists with impunity." [17b]

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19. HUMAN RIGHTS INSTITUTIONS, ORGANISATIONS AND ACTIVISTS

- 19.01 The US State Department *2009 Human Rights Report: Russia* (USSD Report 2009), published on 11 March 2010, noted:

"Domestic and international human rights groups operated in the country, investigating and publicly commenting on human rights problems, but official harassment continued, and the operating environment for these groups was further restricted. Authorities increasingly harassed NGOs that focused on politically sensitive areas. Other official actions and statements indicated a lack of tolerance for unfettered NGO activity,

particularly by those NGOs that received foreign funding or reported on human rights violations. NGOs operating in the Northern Caucasus were severely restricted.

“There were several dozen large NGO umbrella organizations as well as thousands of small grassroots NGOs...

“The law regulating NGOs ... requires them to register with the Ministry of Justice. The local affiliates of foreign NGOs faced more stringent registration requirements than purely domestic ones Officials are authorized to scrutinize NGOs, including public associations, intrusively, and the law gives NGOs only limited procedural protections. ...In June President Medvedev convened a working group to modify the NGO law, resulting in a decrease in registration requirements for NGOs.

“A June 2008 prime ministerial decree, implemented in January, removed tax-exempt status of most international NGOs, making their grants taxable, and imposed a potentially onerous annual registration process on those that met the requirements for continuing operation in the country. Many NGOs interpreted the decree as a further step to restrict NGO funding and operations; however, at year's end there was no notable decrease in NGO activity.” [6b] (Section 2)

- 19.02 See the Freedom House, [Freedom in the World 2010 – Russia](#) report for further information on the above topic. [17a]

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20. CORRUPTION

- 20.01 The USSD Report 2009 stated:

“The law provides criminal penalties for official corruption; however, the government acknowledged that it had not implemented the law effectively, and many officials continued to engage in corrupt practices. Corruption was widespread throughout the executive, legislative, and judicial branches at all levels of government. Manifestations included bribery of officials, misuse of budgetary resources, theft of government property, kickbacks in the procurement process, extortion, and improper use of official position to secure personal profits. The NGO Information Science for Democracy (INDEM) reported that other official institutions, such as the higher education system, health care, the military draft system, and the municipal apartment distribution system were also riddled with corruption. INDEM also estimated that bribes and corruption cost the country the equivalent of 33 percent of the country's gross domestic product. Corruption also exacerbated illegal logging and hunting, further complicating the country efforts to enforce environmental standards.” [6b] (Section 4)

- 20.02 In its 2009 Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI), published in November 2009, Transparency International ranked Russia at 146 out of 180 countries, with a CPI score of 2.2. The CPI defines corruption as the abuse of public office for private gain, and measures the degree to which corruption is perceived to exist among a country's public officials and politicians. The CPI is a composite index that draws on multiple expert opinion surveys. The CPI scores range from 10 (low level of corruption) to 0 (high level of corruption). [20a]

Further information on institutionalised corruption can be found at [Massive Corruption Threatens Russian State](#) [46a]

See also [Forged and fraudulently obtained official documents](#)

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21. FREEDOM OF RELIGION

- 21.01 The US State Department (USSD) 2009 *International Religious Freedom Report* on Russia, published on 26 October 2009, stated:

“The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, and the Government generally respected this right in practice; however, in some cases authorities imposed restrictions on certain groups. Although the Constitution provides for the equality of all religions before the law and the separation of church and state, the Government did not always respect these provisions ... government policy continued to contribute to the generally free practice of religion for most of the population. Some federal agencies, such as the Department of Non-Profit Organizations within the Ministry of Justice, and many local authorities continued to restrict the rights of a few religious minorities. Legal obstacles to registration under a complex 1997 law ‘On Freedom of Conscience and Associations’ (the 1997 Law) continued to seriously disadvantage some religious groups viewed as non-traditional. There were indications that the security services, including the Federal Security Service (FSB), treated the leadership of some Islamic and non-traditional groups, including Jehovah’s Witnesses, as security threats.” [6c] (Introduction)

RELIGIOUS DEMOGRAPHY

- 21.02 The USSD 2009 *International Religious Freedom Report* on Russia stated:

“The country has an area of 6,592,769 square miles and a population of 142 million. In practice, only a minority of citizens actively participated in any religion. Many who identified themselves as members of a religious group participated in religious life rarely or not at all. There is no single set of reliable statistics that breaks down the population by denomination, and the statistics below are compiled from government, polling, and religious group sources.

“Approximately 100 million citizens identify themselves as Russian Orthodox. Muslims, with a population estimated between 10 million and 23 million, form the largest religious minority. The majority of Muslims live in the Volga-Ural region and the North Caucasus, although Moscow, St. Petersburg, and parts of Siberia also have sizable Muslim populations. There are an estimated one million Buddhists, the majority of whom live in the traditionally Buddhist regions of Buryatiya, Tuva, and Kalmykiya. According to the NGO Slavic Center for Law and Justice, Protestants make up the second largest group of Christian believers, with 3,500 registered organizations and more than 2 million followers. The Roman Catholic Church estimated that there are 600,000 Catholics, most of whom are not ethnic Russians. There are an estimated 250,000 Jews, the majority of whom live in Moscow and St. Petersburg. In some areas, such as Yakutiya and Chukotka, pantheistic and nature-based religions are practiced independently or along with other religions.

“According to a statement by a representative of the Ministry of Justice in May 2009, 23,078 religious organizations were registered as of January 1, 2009, 1,115 more than January 2008. In June 2008 these groups broke down as follows: Russian Orthodox (12,586), Muslim (3,815), Protestant (several denominations totaling 3,410), Jehovah’s

Witnesses (402), Jewish (286), Orthodox Old Believers (283), Roman Catholic (240), Buddhist (200), and other denominations. The majority of Russia's large economic immigrant population comes from Muslim countries in Central Asia and the Caucasus.” [6c] (Section 1)

RESTRICTIONS ON RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

21.03 The USSD 2009 *International Religious Freedom Report* on Russia stated:

“The Government selectively enforced legal restrictions on religious freedom. Restrictions on religious freedom generally fall into four categories: registration of religious organizations, access to places of worship (including access to land and building permits), visas for foreign religious personnel, and government harassment of religious organizations or individuals. In the first three cases, religious communities rely upon government officials to grant them permission to assemble, own or build property, or allow persons into the country. [6c] (Section 1)

The following links provide further useful information on the above topic:

The US State Department 2009 *Human Rights Report: Russia* (USSD Report 2009), published on 11 March 2010, <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2009/eur/136054.htm> [6b] (Section 2c: Freedom of Religion)

US State Department, *International Religious Freedom Report 2009: Russia*, 26 October 2009 <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127333.htm> [6c]

Freedom House, *Freedom in the World 2010*, 3 May 2010 <http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=363&year=2010&country=7904> [17a]

United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, 2010: Russia http://www.uscirf.gov/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=3373 [47a]

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22. ETHNIC GROUPS

22.01 Minority Rights Group International, in its overview of the Russian Federation, accessed 14 October 2010, stated that:

“According to the 2002 national census, the main minority groups include Tatars 5,554,601 (3.8%), Ukrainians 2,942,961 (2.0%), Bashkirs 1,673,389 (1.1%), Chuvash 1,637,094 (1.1%), Chechens 1,360,253 (0.9%), Armenians 1,130,491 (0.8%), Mordovans 843,350 (0.6%) and Avars 814,473 (0.6%). Other groups comprise 13,321,012 people or 9.2% of the total population.” [34a]

22.02 The same report continued;

“There are also substantial Muslim populations, and after the collapse of the Soviet Union there has been a revival of Islam and Muslim culture. Most Muslims are of the Sunni branch of Islam. A number of Muslim political parties have been formed. The territorially based Muslims can be subdivided into two main geographical groups: Tatars and Bashkirs of the Middle Volga, and peoples of the North Caucasus.

“Dagestan in the North Caucasus is one of the most ethnically complex areas of the former Soviet Union. The republic has no titular population (pop. 1,802,188: Avars 28 per cent, Dargins 16 per cent, Kumyks 13 per cent, Lezgins 11 per cent, Russians 9 per cent, Nogai 2 per cent, others 21 per cent). Except for Russians, the largest groups - Avars, Dargins, Kumyks, Lezgins - are all Sunni Muslim.” [34a]

- 22.03 Ethnologue.com, a website specialising in languages of the world, accessed on 14 October 2010, stated that:

“The National or official language of the Russian Federation is Russian with the number of individual languages listed as 105. Of those, 100 are living languages and 5 have no known speakers.” [33a]

- 22.04 The US State Department *2009 Human Rights Report: Russia* (USSD Report 2009), published on 11 March 2010, stated:

“The law prohibits discrimination based on nationality; however, government officials at times subjected minorities to discrimination. Recent years have seen a steady rise in societal violence and discrimination against minorities, particularly Roma, persons from the Caucasus and Central Asia, dark-skinned persons, and foreigners. Although the number of reported hate crimes decreased during the year, skinhead groups and other extreme nationalist organizations fomented racially motivated violence. Racist propaganda remained a problem during the year, although courts continued to convict individuals of inciting ethnic hatred by means of propaganda.” [6b] (Section 6)

CURRENT STATE OF MINORITIES AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

- 22.05 Minority Rights Group International, in its overview of the Russian Federation, stated that:

“Due to the wide range in size, settlement patterns and administrative entitlement, minorities and indigenous peoples in Russia face a diverse set of current problems and challenges. Five main strands may be identified. First, violent secessionism and a resulting deterioration in basic security, with corresponding costs in terms of social cohesion, afflict several minorities in the North Caucasus, the most troubled region of the Russian Federation. Second, increased racial discrimination and xenophobia across the Russian Federation have serious implications for many members of minorities living outside of their traditional homelands or in large cities. Third, identity loss, language shift and assimilation confront many of the smaller minorities in the Russian Federation, particularly in the Russian North, Siberia, the Far East and the North Caucasus. Fourth, government attempts to define and channel debates on national identity continue to posit problematic distinctions between ethnic Russians and other citizens of the Federation. Finally, attempts to abolish or downgrade the level of administrative entitlement for a number of smaller minorities in the name of consolidating territorial units threatens their capacity to defend and promote their rights.” [34a]

The following links provide useful information on the above topic:

[The Everyculture.com: Russia](#) [48a]

The Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, [Chinese migration to Russia: missed opportunities, 2009](#) [49a]

[State of the World's Minorities and Indigenous Peoples 2010: Russia](#) [34a]

Report on implementation by the Russian Federation of the [Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities](#), 9 April 2010. [50a]

Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous people, James Anaya
Addendum, [Situation of indigenous peoples in the Russian Federation](#), 23 June 2010 [25b]

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23. LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL AND TRANSGENDER PERSONS

LEGAL RIGHTS

- 23.01 GlobalGayz.com, accessed 14 October 2010, stated on its website that “As of 2008, Russia has no criminal law directed at LGBT people and has refused to enact legislation to address discrimination or harassment on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity.” [32a]

TREATMENT BY, AND ATTITUDE OF, STATE AUTHORITIES

- 23.02 The US State Department *2009 Human Rights Report: Russia* (USSD Report 2009), published on 11 March 2010, stated:

“While homosexuality was decriminalized in 1993, the gay and lesbian communities continued to suffer societal stigma and discrimination. Gay rights activists asserted that the majority of gay Russians hide their orientation out of fear of losing their jobs or their homes, as well as the threat of violence. Medical practitioners reportedly continued to limit or deny gay and lesbian persons access to health services due to intolerance and prejudice. According to recent studies, gay men were refused work due to their sexuality. Openly gay men were targets for skinhead aggression; police often failed to respond out of indifference. A few gay rights organizations operated but did so out of public view.

“In March 2008 two youths killed a man they perceived to be gay. Police arrested both individuals and at year's end they remained under investigation.” [6b] (Section 6)

SOCIETAL TREATMENT AND ATTITUDES

- 23.03 GlobalGayz.com stated on its website that:

“Public opinion about LGBT topics and people tends to be negative, although there is a visible LGBT community network, including nightclubs and political organizations. On May 27, 2007 a gay rights demonstration banned by Moscow Mayor Yuri Luzhkov, who had earlier branded it as “satanic”, was held in Moscow again and for the second year running degenerated into violent clashes with anti-gay protestors. For the second time police failed to protect gay rights activists. On June 1, 2008, gay demonstrators in Moscow again attempted to hold a gay parade. Some 13 Orthodox opposers were held by police for violent actions against protesters.” [32a]

The following links provide more in-depth and useful information on the above topic covering a number of salient areas:

[Discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity in Russia](#), 5 April 2009 [61a]

The situation of lesbians, gays, bisexuals, and transgender people in the Russian Federation, 2008 (Translated 2010) [18b]

[http://www.ilga-](http://www.ilga-europe.org/home/publications/reports_and_other_materials/the_situation_of_lesbians_gays_bisexuals_and_transgender_people_in_the_russian_federation_2008_translated_in_2010)

[europe.org/home/publications/reports and other materials/the situation of lesbians g
ays bisexuals and transgender people in the russian federation 2008 translated i
n 2010](http://www.ilga-europe.org/home/publications/reports_and_other_materials/the_situation_of_lesbians_gays_bisexuals_and_transgender_people_in_the_russian_federation_2008_translated_in_2010)

Shadow Report - [Discrimination and Violence against lesbian and bisexual women and transgender people in Russia](#), 46th CEDAW Session New York, USA

12 – 30 July 2010

Gay rights in Russia, 14 October 2010 [61b]

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24. DISABILITY

- 24.01 According to *DisabilityWorld* an international online magazine dedicated to advancing an exchange of information and expertise about the international independent living movement of people with disabilities:

“There are over 10 million disabled people in Russia, nearly 700,000 who are children and young adults (18 years of age or younger). In Russia, disabled people have traditionally been isolated from the mainstream community.

“Since the 1990s, with the emergence of disability and parents' non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and the passage of disability legislation, significant changes have occurred to improve the quality of life of persons with disabilities. Today, employment programs for disabled people and a handful of integrated educational programs have been launched in several Russian cities. Kremlin officials on many occasions have publicly acknowledged the problem of inaccessibility and the lack of federal support for the disability community.

“Despite these positive changes, disabled people in Russia still face daily discrimination, as well as physical barriers to education, employment, recreational activities, family life and participation in community life. Although disability legislation has been passed on the federal and local levels, implementation mechanisms, such as procedures for fining inaccessible public places, have not been codified, rendering legislation largely symbolic and ineffectual.” [27a]

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25. WOMEN

OVERVIEW

- 25.01 The *Freedom in the World* 2010 report, published by Freedom House on 3 May 2010, stated:

“Women in Russia have particular difficulty achieving political power. They hold 14 percent of the Duma’s seats and less than 5 percent of the Federation Council’s. None of the key positions in the federal executive branch are held by women, and the female governor of St. Petersburg is the main exception at the regional level. Domestic violence continues to be a serious problem, and police are often reluctant to intervene in what they regard as internal family matters. Economic hardships contribute to widespread trafficking of women abroad for prostitution.” [17a]

- 25.02 Regarding the ratification of international conventions relating to women’s rights and gender equality, Russia has ratified in particular the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). The Committee considered the combined sixth and seventh report of the Russian Federation ([CEDAW/C/USR/7](#)) at its 930th and 931st meetings, on 15 July 2010 (see [CEDAW/C/SR.930 and 931](#)). The Committee’s list of issues and questions is contained in [CEDAW/C/USR/Q/7](#), and the responses of the Russian Federation are contained in [CEDAW/C/USR/Q/7/Add.1](#). The committees concluding observations are at [CEDAW/C/USR/CO/7](#). [25a]

See below for ‘[shadow reports](#)’ on [CEDAW/C/USR/7](#).

See the [CEDAW Assessment Tool Report for the Russian Federation](#), February 2006 [51a] for an analysis of Russia’s compliance with the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

LEGAL RIGHTS

- 25.03 According to the OECD Social Institutions and Gender Index (accessed on 1 October 2010):

“The Russian Family Code protects women reasonably well, but discriminatory traditions persist in some regions. The minimum legal age for marriage is 18 years for both men and women. The local authorities can authorise marriage from the age of 16 years – and even earlier in some regions – if it is considered to be justified. ... By law, marriage requires the free consent of both spouses, but does not need to be authorised by the bride’s family. In some regions where tradition remains strong (for example, Dagestan), consent of the bride’s family still carries heavy weight: brides are sometimes abducted if their parents express opposition to the marriage.

“Polygamy is prohibited by Russia’s Family Code, but the practice remains common within the Muslim community, particularly in the Caucasus region. Only the marriage to the first wife is recorded; subsequent wives are not considered to be legally married.

“The Russian Family Code provides for shared parental authority; mothers and fathers have equal rights and responsibilities within the family. If a couple cannot agree about the custody of the children in the event of divorce, a court makes the decision. In the vast majority of cases, custody is awarded to the mother. If a father fails to pay child support, a court can order it to be deducted directly from his salary. It is very difficult to enforce such court orders, in part because men often underestimate their earnings on income statements. Russian women and men have the same legal inheritance rights.” [19a]

POLITICAL RIGHTS

- 25.04 The US State Department *2009 Human Rights Report: Russia* (USSD Report 2009), published on 11 March 2010, stated:

“There were 63 women in the 450-member State Duma and nine women in the 166-member Federation Council. There were two female ministers. Valentina Matviyenko, governor of St. Petersburg, was the only woman to lead one of the country’s 83 regions. Three of the 19 judges on the Constitutional Court were women. None of the political parties was led by a woman.” [6b] (Section 3)

See also [Political system](#) and [Political affiliation](#)

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC RIGHTS

- 25.05 According to the OECD Social Institutions and Gender Index (accessed on 1 October 2010):

“Women’s civil liberties are guaranteed by Russian law, but still restricted by tradition in certain regions. In general, women have freedom of movement and freedom of dress. Married women are free to choose a job and spouses decide together where they will live. These liberties are restricted in regions such as the Caucasus, where the population is predominantly Muslim and patriarchal traditions allow husbands to exert an influence over their wives’ movements and dress.

“Russian legislation upholds equal ownership rights for women and men, but various restrictions limit their ability to acquire and administer assets. In general, women earn lower salaries than men, are more often unemployed, and remain responsible for the bulk of family obligations. These factors make it difficult for women to rise to management positions in the business sector.

“The Russian Civil Code provides equal rights to access to land and access to property other than land for men and women. All property acquired during a marriage is the couple’s joint property; unless their marriage contract states otherwise, it is split into two equal shares in the event of divorce. Each spouse retains ownership and management of property acquired before marriage or inherited after marriage.

“Russian men and women have equal rights to obtain access to bank loans, but women often encounter significant restrictions.” [19a]

Further background information can be found in the [Global Gender Gap Report 2010](#) [52a]

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

- 25.06 According to the OECD Social Institutions and Gender Index (accessed on 1 October 2010):

“In Russia, rape is punishable by three to six years in prison; sentences can be increased to 8 to 15 years if the victim is a minor under the age of 14 or if she dies. Victims must have their complaints recorded by the police and must obtain authorisation to be examined by a doctor. The police often obstruct the complaints procedure by deliberately postponing this authorisation until such time as the medical examination becomes useless in terms of collecting evidence. It is difficult to assess the incidence of

rape in Russia. Because they receive no protection, victims are reticent to speak out and many withdraw their complaints under the threat of reprisals from the rapist.” [19a]

25.07 The US State Department *2009 Human Rights Report: Russia* (USSD Report 2009), published on 11 March 2010, stated:

“Rape is illegal, and the law makes no distinctions (as in cases of spousal rape) based on the relationship between the rapist and the victim. According to NGOs, many women did not report rape or other violence due to social stigma and lack of government support. ... The Syosty call center, which helps victims of sexual abuse, reported in December that it had received 3,534 calls in Moscow during the year.

“Spousal or acquaintance rape was not widely perceived as a problem by society or law enforcement authorities. Women were unlikely to report cases of rape by persons they knew. Law enforcement personnel and prosecutors did not consider the problem a priority and reportedly did not encourage reporting or prosecution of such cases.

“Domestic violence remained a major problem. As of March the Ministry of Internal Affairs maintained records on more than 4 million perpetrators of domestic violence. The ministry estimated that a woman died every 40 minutes at the hands of a husband, boyfriend, or other family member and that 80 percent of women had experienced domestic violence at least once in their lives. The ministry also estimated that 3,000 men a year were killed by wives or girlfriends whom they had beaten. However, the reluctance of victims to report domestic violence meant that reliable statistical information on its scope was impossible to obtain. Official telephone directories contained no information on crisis centers or shelters. [see penultimate paragraph below] Law enforcement authorities frequently failed to respond to reports of domestic violence.

“There is no legal definition of domestic violence. The law prohibits battery, assault, threats, and murder, but most acts of domestic violence did not fall within the jurisdiction of the Prosecutor's Office. Victims of these crimes had to prosecute such cases themselves, which was difficult without legal training or state assistance. Consequently, few cases were prosecuted, and there were few convictions. According to a March study by the Smolensk-based Center for Women's Support, police often gave lackluster and inadequate responses to calls reporting domestic violence, at times suggesting that the case ‘wait until morning.’ Police were often unwilling to register complaints of domestic violence and frequently discouraged victims from submitting them. A majority of cases filed were either dismissed on technical grounds or transferred to a reconciliation process conducted by a justice of the peace whose focus was on preserving the family rather than punishing the perpetrator. Civil remedies for domestic violence included administrative fines and divorce. The Center for Women's Support asserted that many perpetrators of domestic violence themselves belonged to law enforcement agencies.

“There were more than 600 government centers for social rehabilitation and shelters of various types; the number of these that offered services to domestic violence victims was unknown. There were also an estimated 20 crisis centers, with a total of 200 beds, 90 percent of them run by NGOs; three of these were in the Moscow area. Crisis centers did not focus exclusively on violence against women, although some offered services, including temporary shelter, to domestic violence victims.

“Honor killings were a problem in some areas, such as the Caucasus region. Observers estimated that 35 to 60 women annually were victims of honor killings in Chechnya.” [6b] (Section 3)

See also various ‘Shadow reports’ in respect of the Russian combined CEDAW sixth and seventh reports ([25.02](#)):

Russian Federation, [Briefing to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women](#). Amnesty International. 46th session July 2010 [14c]

[Front Line](#) (International Foundation for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders) & International Commission of Jurists. [53a]

ANNA, National Centre for the Prevention of Violence, Violence against Women in the Russian Federation, [Alternative Report to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women](#) - 46th session, July 2010. Examination of the 6th and 7th reports submitted by the Russian Federation. [54a]

The Alternative report prepared by the [Consortium of Women’s Non-Governmental Associations](#) - March 2010 [55a]

Prepared by the Regional Public Organization “Novgorod Gender Centre “(Russian Federation) [Discrimination and Status of Rural Women in the Russian Federation](#). [56a]

The civil society organizations from the Russian Federation, [Discrimination against women from vulnerable groups, including women who use drugs and/or engage in sex work in the Russian Federation](#). [57a]

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26. CHILDREN

Basic legal information

- 26.01 The US State Department *2009 Human Rights Report: Russia* (USSD Report 2009), published on 11 March 2010, stated:

“By law citizenship is derived from parents at birth or from birth on Russian soil if the parents are unknown or are foreigners. As a rule all newly born babies are registered at the local civil registry office (ZAGS) where parents live. One of the parents must apply for registration within a month of the birth date, and on the basis of medical certificate of the hospital where the baby was born, a birth certificate is issued. There were unsubstantiated reports of occasional unregistered births.” [6b] (Section six)

- 26.02 The Law Library of Congress, in its [Children’s Rights: International and National Laws and Practice: Country Report on the Russian Federation](#) [8b] dated August 2007, stated:

“The Russian Constitution, which was adopted in 1993, provides for the state protection of childhood, motherhood, and the family. According to the Constitution, hundreds of laws, presidential decrees, government resolutions, executive regulations of specific agencies, and legal acts of the constituent components of the Russian Federation are supposed to secure rights of children. The primary documents in this field are the

Family Code of the Russian Federation and the Federal Law on Basic Guarantees of the Rights of the Child in the Russian Federation of July 21, 1998. Child protection policy is also affected by the implementation of relevant provisions of such legislative acts, as the Civil Code, Labor Code, Housing Code, Criminal Code, Criminal Correctional Code, Fundamentals of Health Care Legislation, Federal Law on State Assistance to Individuals having Minor Children, Federal Law on State Support of Youth and Children's Organizations, Federal Law on Social Assistance, and many others." [8b]

LEGAL RIGHTS

26.03 In its country report, the Law Library of Congress stated that:

"It appears that from the legal point of view, such basic rights as the right to life, dignity, personal inviolability, housing, education, freedom of movement, social security, protection of health and health assistance, access to cultural values, and others are protected. All the typical problems, however, of the implementation of Russian legislation and the functioning of government institutions are inherent in the area of children's rights protection. Among these problems are that there is no separation of powers between the federal and regional levels of authorities; contradictions within the legislation; no defined division between federal and state budgets in regard to the payment of state subsidies to children; maintenance of social support institutions; and absence of working mechanisms that would provide for rehabilitation and integration of children with disabilities." [8b]

IMPLEMENTATION OF INTERNATIONAL RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

26.04 The Law Library of Congress, in its country report, stated that:

"As a legal successor to the former Soviet Union, Russia became a party to the International Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC), which was ratified on August 16, 1990.⁵ On February 15, 2001, Russia signed the Optional Protocol to the International Convention of the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict. After the Convention was ratified, Russia attempted to bring its domestic legislation in accordance with international obligations in the field of children's rights protection. The Federal Law on Basic Guarantees of the Rights of the Child in the Russian Federation of July 21, 1998 repeats all the provisions of the CRC... Regardless of the declaration of children's rights in Russian legislation, provisions of Russian laws are not implemented and there is no mechanism that would make the existing legal provisions work." [8b]

VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN

26.05 The USSD Report 2009 stated:

"Child abuse was a widespread problem. The law did not adequately protect children from abuse, and the majority of child abuse cases were not subject to legal action. In June the Duma passed a law that increased the maximum sentence for rape of a minor to 20 years. It also increased the penalties for child molestation and distributing child pornography." [6b] (Section six)

And continued:

"In 2005 the Moscow Helsinki Group indicated that approximately two million children under 14 years of age were victims of domestic violence annually. While the

government paid some attention to child abuse, it did not generally link it to the broader problem of domestic violence. At a public roundtable on children's rights in January 2008, a representative of the Ministry of Internal Affairs stated that approximately 2,000 children died annually from violence, most of it domestic. As of year's end, there were approximately 5,000 active court cases against parents for abuse and neglect of their children." [6b] (Section six)

CHILDCARE AND PROTECTION

26.06 The Law Library of Congress, in its country report, stated that:

"The growing number of orphaned children and the absence of an effective legal defense of children from domestic violence exemplify the non-implementation of declared rights. The Federal Law on Prevention of Orphanage and Crimes Committed by Minors, which established local and regional government commissions on the affairs of minors to coordinate child protection activities, did not meet the expectations. The Law defines the rights of orphaned children who are the subject of police and other government authorities' activities, and protects the rights of children who have committed violations of law." [8b]

26.07 The USSD Report 2009 stated:

"In a December 2008 report, the NGO Children's Rights estimated that approximately 40,000 children ran away from home annually to escape abuse and neglect and that 20,000 orphans fled similar conditions in orphanages. The report, as updated in February, noted that there were approximately 120,000 new orphans every year" [6b] (Section six)

26.08 An article in AsiaNews.IT accessed 14 October 2010 stated that:

"The fact is that in the Russian Federation, according to experts, there are too many orphans, too many orphanages and few local adoptions. At present, there are more 'official' orphans now than during the Second World War, almost 700,000 (697,000 to be precise) against 678,000 in the 1940s. Two thirds of orphans are in fact "social orphans", children taken from their birth family because of alcoholism, domestic violence or rejection by the parents. [29a]

See [Orphan care in Russia](#) [28a] for further information.

EDUCATION

26.09 The USSD Report 2009 stated:

"Although education was free to grade 11 and compulsory until age 15 or 16, regional authorities frequently denied school access to the children of persons not registered as residents of the locality, including Roma, asylum seekers, and migrants. [6b] (Section six)

26.10 The Law Library of Congress, in its country report stated that

"The first level of organized education consists of preschool institutions, called kindergartens, which cater for children from two months up to six years. Although they are heavily subsidized by the state, parents of children attending kindergartens have to pay a fee depending on family income and the length of daily stay of a child in the kindergarten. Although attendance in kindergartens is not obligatory, many regions

legislate that attendance of the last year of kindergarten shall be obligatory in order to prepare the child for attending school. Primary and secondary education in Russian schools is combined, and children between six and eighteen years of age attend the twelve-year school. A ten-year school education is mandatory, according to the Federal Law on Education. Obtaining mandatory secondary education is a constitutional responsibility of each citizen. The obligation to attend school is to be enforced in regard to each individual under fifteen years of age.” (8B)

HEALTH AND WELFARE

26.11 The Law Library of Congress, in its country report stated that:

“Despite the fact that article 1 of the CRC states that everyone under eighteen years of age is recognized as a child, most specialized health care programs in Russia do not include children older than fourteen, or older than sixteen, if a child is disabled. Parental consent for medical procedures is required for children under sixteen ... The basic legal principles of health care for minors were defined by the Fundamentals of Russian Federation Legislation on Health Care. This legal act established federal guarantees of receiving free medical assistance by children in all state and municipal health care establishments. Free immunization of children is prescribed by law, and more than ninety percent of Russian children are immunized. Many regions legislated to create state legal norms that provide for additional protection of children’s health. They extend the number of medical procedures and treatments provided without charge, in addition to those covered by mandatory medical insurance under federal legislation, allow for free distribution of medicines to children under three years of age, and require qualified medical assistance in all nursing and child care facilities. However, inclusion of these provisions in legislative acts does not secure their implementation because the responsible authorities do not fulfill their duties and obligations. In 2005, inspections conducted by the office of the Russian Prosecutor General found serious violations of a child’s right to health care in more than twenty constituent components of Russia. Local and state authorities illegally decreased the amount and forms of health services which should be provided to children for free, approved the performance of paid medical services in state and municipal hospitals, and no region in Russia completely implemented the Government Regulation of June 21, 2003, under which all children under three years of age, and those who have more than three siblings under six years of age were to receive free medicines. Most of the problems exist because of insufficient budget financing, which demonstrates that the government cannot guarantee the implementation of rights which it has declared.” [8b]

See also [WHO](#) and [UNICEF](#) for further background.

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27. TRAFFICKING

OVERVIEW

27.01 The US State Department (USSD) *Trafficking in Persons Report* 2010, published on 14 June 2010, stated:

“Russia is a source, transit, and destination country for men, women, and children subjected to trafficking in persons, specifically forced labor, and for women and children

forced into prostitution. In 2009, the ILO reported that forced labor is the most predominant form of trafficking in Russia. Men from the Russian Far East are subjected to conditions of debt bondage and forced labor, including in the agricultural and fishing sectors. Men, women, and children from Russia and other countries ... are subjected to conditions of forced labor in Russia, including work in the construction industry, in textile shops, and in agriculture. An estimated 40,000 men and women from North Korea are subjected to conditions of forced labor in Russia, specifically in the logging industry. Women from Russia are also subjected to conditions of forced labor in Armenia. Women from Russia are subjected to conditions of forced prostitution or are victims of sex trafficking in a number of countries ... Women from Africa, including Ghana and Nigeria, as well as from Central Asia are subjected to forced prostitution in Russia, while children from Russia, Ukraine, and Moldova are subjected to forced prostitution and forced begging in Moscow and St. Petersburg. ... Experts continue to credit a decrease in the number of child trafficking victims in these cities to aggressive police investigations and Russian cooperation with foreign law enforcement.” [6d]

GOVERNMENT EFFORTS TO TACKLE TRAFFICKING

27.02 The USSD *Trafficking in Persons Report* 2010 stated:

“The Government of the Russian Federation does not fully comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking; however, it is making significant efforts to do so. Despite these efforts, the government did not over the last year: develop a comprehensive strategy that addresses all forms of trafficking and provides comprehensive victim assistance, nor did it establish a national level body responsible for coordinating government efforts to combat trafficking, and victim identification and assistance remained inadequate and diminished during the reporting period; therefore, Russia is placed on Tier 2 Watch List for the seventh consecutive year. In November 2009, the government failed to allocate funding to prevent the closure of the IOM-run shelter and rehabilitation center in Moscow. The shelter and rehabilitation center opened in March 2006 with foreign funding and assisted 423 victims of both sex and labor trafficking, including men and women, through November 2009; its closure created a significant void in the availability of medical, rehabilitative, and reintegration services for trafficking victims in Russia. The federal government did not dedicate funding to anti-trafficking activities or trafficking victim assistance during the reporting period. Despite limited funding by some local governments, the majority of shelter and direct trafficking assistance continued to be provided by foreign-funded international organizations and NGOs. There were also reports that identified foreign victims were held in detention centers and deported, rather than being referred to NGOs for assistance.” [6d]

PROTECTION

27.03 The USSD *Trafficking in Persons Report* 2010 stated:

“The Russian government demonstrated very limited efforts to protect and assist victims during the reporting period. The government also showed inadequate efforts to identify victims; the majority of assisted victims continued to be identified by NGOs or international organizations. Some municipalities across Russia had cooperation agreements between NGOs and local authorities to refer victims for assistance, though there was no national policy or system of victim referrals. In November 2009, the government failed to allocate funding to prevent the closure of the IOM-run shelter and rehabilitation center in Moscow, creating a significant void in the availability of medical,

rehabilitative, and reintegration services for trafficking victims. The Russian government continued to lack national policies and national programs to provide specific assistance for trafficking victims. The majority of aid to NGOs and international organizations providing victim assistance continued to be funded by international donors. Some local governments reportedly provided in-kind and modest financial support to some anti-trafficking NGOs ...

“... Although the government did not track the number of victims assisted by local governments and NGOs in 2009, some victims of trafficking were provided with limited assistance at regional and municipal-run government-funded domestic violence and homeless shelters. However, the quality of these shelters varied and they were often ill-equipped to provide for the specific legal, medical, and psychological needs of trafficking victims. Also, many foreign and Russian victims found in regions where they did not reside were denied access to state-run general health care and social assistance programs, as local governments restricted eligibility to these services to local registered residents.

“In 2009, IOM and NGOs reported assisting at least 143 victims of human trafficking – including 139 victims assisted by the IOM rehabilitation center in Moscow prior to its closure in November 2009 ... In January 2010, the government placed four identified victims of sex trafficking from Africa in a temporary detention facility for foreign nationals pending deportation ... “[6d]

See also [Human Rights - Introduction](#); [Children](#) and [Women](#)

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28. MEDICAL ISSUES

OVERVIEW OF AVAILABILITY OF MEDICAL TREATMENT AND DRUGS

THE HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

28.01 The International Organization for Migration (IOM) in a paper, *Information on Return and Reintegration in the Countries of Origin* – IRRICO, Russian Federation, updated 13 November 2009, stated that::

“In the Russian Federation, medical care is provided both by the state and by private medical institutions. The majority of current medical institutions are run by the state. However, the private sector is developing rapidly. Health care in Russia is in a difficult situation. According to the Minister of Health and Social Development, it is only financed from the state budget at half the amount required. About 80% of state medical institutions are financed from regional and/or municipal budgets which have inadequate financial resources for the task and cannot secure high-level medical care. Medical equipment is usually obsolete and basic medical institutions are understaffed at about 60% of the proper level. As a result, the quality of free medical services is falling. [35]

ACCESS TO MEDICAL TREATMENT

28.02 The IOM report continued:

“The state guarantees all Russian citizens the right to free medical care through a system of obligatory medical insurance (OMS). Insurance companies are selected by

the state in each region. They are financed from state budgets at all levels, from tax revenues and other sources.

“Free medical care covers the following services:

- emergency medical care;
- ambulatory care including preventative treatments, diagnosis, and treatment of diseases both at home and in polyclinics;
- treatment in hospital.

“Every person within the OMS system has a medical insurance policy card, with an individual number. It is issued on the basis of an agreement between an individual and an insurance company. Citizens are provided with this agreement and a plastic card when they are registered on the insurance system. It guarantees access to medical care on the territory of the Russian Federation, irrespective of place of residence. ... The ambulance service is available free to all Russian citizens.

“There is a system of free paediatric care which covers children from birth to 14 years, with specialised polyclinics and clinics. This system applies to children who are covered by the obligatory medical insurance (OMS) to which all children of Russian Federation citizens are entitled. After they reach 14 years, children are cared for by medical institutions for adults. It is also possible to obtain a free online medical consultation through the Internet.

“There are private medical institutions that provide medical services to the population irrespective of citizenship. However, due to the high prices, this option is not available to the majority of the population. Both Russian citizens and foreigners can opt for voluntary medical insurance (DMS) on a paid basis, which is developing swiftly in the country.” [35a]

See also [Children - Health and Welfare](#)
See also USAID: [Health in Russia - 2010](#) [36b]

HIV/AIDS – ANTI-RETROVIRAL TREATMENT

28.03 The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), in its HIV/AIDS health profile dated September 2010, stated that:

“Russia has the second-highest HIV prevalence in Eastern Europe and Eurasia: 1.1 percent in the adult population. According to the Joint United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), an estimated 940,000 people in Russia were living with HIV in 2007. The first cases of HIV in the country were diagnosed among men who have sex with men (MSM) in 1987. Russia’s HIV prevalence remained very low until 1996, when 1,515 new cases connected to infections among injecting drug users (IDUs) were reported. While the pace of the country’s HIV epidemic has slowed since the late 1990s, it continues to grow. According to UNAIDS, a decline in new cases occurred between 2001 and 2003, but since then the number of new cases has continued to increase.” [36a]

28.04 The same report continued:

“The Government of Russia has made a number of commitments to address the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Federal funding for the response has grown rapidly since 2005. In 2006, the Government Commission on HIV/AIDS was established, comprising representatives from 11 federal ministries and services, parliamentarians, and civil society representatives. ... Government programs focus primarily on treatment of AIDS rather than prevention, care, and support. Russia also has a widely implemented program for the prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV. HIV counseling and testing is virtually universally accessible ... HIV testing is free and must be done with pre- and post-testing counseling. As of 2007, 16 percent of PLWHA needing antiretroviral therapy (ART) were receiving it. According to WHO/UNAIDS/UNICEF, the number of HIV-positive people on ART increased by 77 percent.” [36a]

MENTAL HEALTH

28.05 The following link provides useful information on mental health facilities:

WHO Mental Health Atlas 2005: [Country Profile: Russian Federation](#) [11b]

28.06 The following links provide useful information on medical treatment in general:

[Health Care Systems in Transition: Russian Federation 2003](#) [21c]

[Report card-HIV prevention for girls and young women, 2008](#) [58a]

[US State Department, 2009 Human Rights Report: Russia \(USSD Report 2009\), 11 March 2010](#) [6b] (Section 6: Other Societal Violence or Discrimination)

[USAID: Health in Russia, 2010](#) [36b]

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29. FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT

29.01 The US State Department *2009 Human Rights Report: Russia* (USSD Report 2009), published on 11 March 2010, stated:

“The law provides for freedom of movement within the country, foreign travel, emigration and repatriation; however, the government placed restrictions on freedom of movement within the country and on migration. ... All adults must carry government-issued internal passports while traveling internally and must register with the local authorities within a specified time of their arrival at a new location.” [6b] (Section 2d)

29.02 The USSD Report 2009 continued:

“Although the law gives citizens the right to choose their place of residence freely, many regional governments continued to restrict this right through residential registration rules that closely resembled Soviet-era regulations. Citizens moving permanently must register within seven days in order to reside, work, or obtain government services and benefits or education for their children in a specific area. Citizens changing residence within the country, migrants, and persons with a legal claim to Russian citizenship who moved to the country from other former-Soviet republics often faced great difficulties or simply were not permitted to register in some cities. The registration process in local police precincts was often corrupt. There were frequent reports of police expecting

bribes to process registration applications and demanding them during spot checks for registration documentation.

“The law provides for freedom to travel abroad and citizens generally did so without restriction; however, there were exceptions. Citizens with access to classified material needed to obtain police and Federal Security Service clearances to receive a passport for international travel.

“The law prohibits forced exile, and the government did not employ it. The law provides all citizens with the right to emigrate, and this right was generally respected.” [6b] (Section 2d)

See also [Exit – entry procedures](#)

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30. INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS (IDPs)

- 30.01 The US State Department *2009 Human Rights Report: Russia* (USSD Report 2009), published on 11 March 2010, stated:

“As of December 31, 8,938 IDPs displaced to Ingushetiya by Chechnya's second conflict were registered in the Danish Refugee Council's North Caucasus database. Of these, 7,217 persons lived in private quarters, while 1,721 resided in temporary settlements. The Federal Migration Service reported that, as of December 31, Ingushetiya was also home to 2,836 IDPs from Prigorodny. At year's end 3,654 Chechen IDPs were living in Dagestan and an estimated 4,193 continued to live in temporary settlements and temporary accommodation centers within Chechnya proper. Also as of December 31, nearly 10,000 forced migrants from South Ossetia in Georgia remained in North Ossetia as a result of conflicts over the Tskhinvali region in the early 1990s and in August 2008.

“Although sources differed on the exact figures, approximately 46,000 IDPs returned from Ingushetiya and Dagestan in the last six years. Authorities continued to employ negative incentives—including deregistration from IDP rolls, cancellation of food assistance, and utility cuts to temporary settlements--to induce often unwilling IDPs in Ingushetiya to return to Chechnya.” [6b] (Section 2)

- 30.02 The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), in its report, *‘Russian Federation: Monitoring of IDPs and returnees still needed’*, 12 October 2009 stated that:

“At least 80,000 people are still internally displaced in Russia, more than 15 years after they were first forced to flee their homes. While large-scale hostilities ended several years ago, violence is still extensive in the North Caucasus and human rights abuses continue with perpetrators enjoying impunity. The economy is improving in Chechnya and reconstruction has brought impressive results in Grozny, but corruption and weak local governance continue to delay full recovery.

“Over 275,000 internally displaced people (IDPs) have returned to Chechnya and North Ossetia, mainly since 1999, but most continue to live in inadequate temporary accommodation. Some returnees to Chechnya report they were under pressure to return from the local authorities, but promises of adequate alternative housing in

Chechnya did not always materialise, while compensation programmes have been insufficient to fund permanent housing.” [38a]

See also [Exit – entry procedures](#)

Report on implementation by the Russian Federation of the [Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities](#), 9 April 2010 [50a].

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31. CITIZENSHIP AND NATIONALITY

31.01 The United States Office of Personnel Management Investigations Service *Citizenship Laws of the World* report, published in March 2001, stated the following about Russian Federation citizenship:

“CITIZENSHIP: Citizenship laws are based upon the Law on Citizenship dated February 6, 1992.

BY BIRTH: If either parent is a citizen of the Russian Federation, and the other is a stateless person, their child shall be a citizen of the Russian Federation, irrespective of the child's place of birth.

BY DESCENT: If both parents are citizens of the Russian Federation, irrespective of the child's place of birth. If one parent is a citizen of the Russian Federation and the other is of another citizenship, the child's citizenship shall be decided, irrespective of the child's place of birth, by a written agreement between the parents. (In the absence of such agreement, the child shall acquire citizenship of the Russian Federation if it were born on the territory of the Russian Federation or if it would otherwise become a stateless person.)

BY REGISTRATION: Persons whose spouse or direct ancestor is a citizen of the Russian Federation. Person who acquired other citizenship by birth, either of whose parents was a citizen of the Russian Federation, may register for citizenship within five years after their 18th birthday.

Children of former Russian Federation citizens, born after the termination of parents' Russian Federation citizenship, may register for citizenship within five years after their 18th birthday.

Former citizens of the USSR who resided on the territory of the former USSR and who came to reside on the territory of the Russian Federation after February 6, 1992, if they declared their intention to acquire citizenship of the Russian Federation by December 31, 2000.

Stateless persons permanently residing on the territory of the Russian Federation on the day of enactment of the present Law, or on the territory of other republics of the former USSR as of September 1, 1991, both of whom within one year of enactment of the present Law declare their intention to acquire citizenship of the Russian Federation.

Foreign citizens and stateless persons, irrespective of their domicile, who themselves are, or one of whose direct ancestors were, a subject of Russia by birth, and who, within

one year of enactment of the present Law, declare their intention to acquire the Russian Federation citizenship.

BY NATURALIZATION: Russian Federation citizenship may be acquired upon fulfilment of the following conditions: Be at least 18 years old. Have permanent residence for a total of five years, or three years of continuous residence immediately prior to filing an application: For refugees recognized as such by the Russian Federation, the time periods shall be halved.

(The period of residence is considered continuous when a person has travelled outside the borders of the Russian Federation for study or medical treatment for longer than three months.)

DUAL CITIZENSHIP: RECOGNIZED. A Russian Federation citizen may be permitted, on petition, to be in simultaneous citizenship of another state with which the Russian Federation has a pertinent treaty.

LOSS OF CITIZENSHIP: No information concerning Involuntary loss was provided.

VOLUNTARY: Renunciation of citizenship of the Russian Federation will be granted upon application for another citizenship when the individual is not in receipt of papers for military call or indictment in a criminal case. [11a]

- 31.02 Norman DL Associates a full service law firm practicing in Russia in a paper, [‘Acquiring Russian citizenship’](#) explained further the various ways to acquire citizenship. [12a]

FORMER SOVIET REPUBLICS

- 31.03 An article in the Boston University International Law Journal, 11 May 2010. [‘Weaponizing Nationality: An analysis of Russia’s passport policy in Georgia’](#) [13a] discussed how Russia justified its 8 August 2008 invasion of Georgia on its “responsibility to protect South Ossetia’s Russian citizens from the Georgian government’s aggression”. The article stated that:

“Russia’s citizenship laws have undergone a significant change in the last decade. Prior to 2002, the process by which a resident of an ex-Soviet republic obtained Russian citizenship was ‘complex and involved repeated trips to Russian consulates or moving to Russia altogether.’ But on May 31, 2002, Russia adopted the [Law on Russian Federation Citizenship](#) [59a], making the acquisition of Russian citizenship by residents of ex-Soviet republics easier. In fact, not only did it become unnecessary to relocate to Russia, residents of South Ossetia were able to ‘apply without leaving their homes’.” [13a]

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32. FORGED AND FRAUDULENTLY OBTAINED OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS

- 32.01 The Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada discussed the subject of the availability and obtaining of illegal documentation in two documents.

[Russia: Availability of fraudulent or illegally obtained identity documents \(1992-Sept. 2002\)](#) [60a] and;

[Russia: Availability of fraudulent or illegally obtained identity documents \(2005 - March 2007\).](#) [60b]

While these documents are relatively old there is nothing to suggest that the information is no longer extant.

See also [Corruption](#)

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33. EXIT – ENTRY PROCEDURES

33.01 The US State Department *2009 Human Rights Report: Russia* (USSD Report 2009), published on 11 March 2010, stated:

“The law provides for freedom to travel abroad and citizens generally did so without restriction; however, there were exceptions. Citizens with access to classified material needed to obtain police and Federal Security Service clearances to receive a passport for international travel.

“The law prohibits forced exile, and the government did not employ it. The law provides all citizens with the right to emigrate, and this right was generally respected.

“De facto authorities in the Georgian separatist regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, as well as Russian troops in the region, restricted freedom of movement. Checkpoints operated by de facto militia and Russian troops often obstructed citizens' internal movement in these regions and between these regions and areas controlled by the Georgian government. International organizations were generally allowed to operate in Abkhazia, with limitations; however, virtually all international organizations, including humanitarian ones, were blocked from entering South Ossetia.” [6b] (Section 2d)

See also [Opposition groups and political activists](#)

See also [Ethnic groups](#)

See also [Trafficking](#)

See also [Citizenship and nationality](#)

Report on implementation by the Russian Federation of the [Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities](#), 9 April 2010. [50a]

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Annex A

CHRONOLOGY OF MAJOR EVENTS

1917

October Bolsheviks overthrow provisional government of Alexander Kerensky, with workers and sailors capturing government buildings and the Winter Palace in St Petersburg, and eventually taking over Moscow. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)

1918

March Treaty of Brest-Litovsk brings war with Germany to an end, but at the cost of Russia ceding large tracts of territory; Tsar Nicholas killed; Baltic States, Finland and Poland cede as the Russian Empire collapses. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)

1918-22

Civil war between the Red Army and White Russians, or anti-communists, who were aided by Britain, France and the US. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)

1922-91

Russia part of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)

1991

Russia becomes "independent" as the Soviet Union collapses and, together with Ukraine and Belarus, forms the Commonwealth of Independent States, which is eventually joined by all former Soviet republics except the Baltic States. Chechnya declares unilateral independence. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)

1992

Russia takes up the seat of the former Soviet Union on the United Nations Security Council. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)
Price controls lifted. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)

1993

September President Boris Yeltsin suspends parliament and calls for new elections following differences with MPs. MPs barricade themselves inside the parliament building. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)

October Yeltsin orders the army to attack parliament, which is recaptured following a bloody battle. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)

December Russians approve a new constitution which gives the president sweeping powers. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)
Communists and ultra-nationalists make large gains in elections to the new legislature, the State Duma, which replaces the former parliament, the Supreme Soviet. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)

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- 1994** Duma pardons participants in anti-Gorbachev coup of August 1991 and parliamentary rebellion of 1993. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)
Russia joins NATO's Partnership for Peace programme. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)
Russian troops invade the breakaway republic of Chechnya. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)
- 1995** Communist Party wins largest share of vote in parliamentary elections, giving it more than one-third of seats in Duma. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)
- 1996** Yeltsin re-elected for another term. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)
He signs a peace treaty with Chechnya and agreement on cooperation with NATO. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)
Russia admitted to the G-7 group of industrialised countries. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)
- 1997** Border treaty signed with Lithuania. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)
- 1998**
- March Yeltsin dismisses Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin and appoints Sergey Kiriyenko in his place. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)
- August Rouble collapses and government gives notice of intention to default on foreign debts. Kiriyenko sacked. Parliament rejects Yeltsin's nomination of Chernomyrdin for prime minister. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)
- September Foreign Minister Yevgeniy Primakov chosen as compromise prime minister and appoints two Communists as ministers. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)
- 1999**
- May Yeltsin sacks Primakov, replacing him with Sergey Stepashin. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)
- August Militants from Chechnya invade the neighbouring Russian constituent republic of Dagestan. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)
Yeltsin sacks Stepashin and replaces him with Vladimir Putin. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)
- September Putin sends Russian troops back into Chechnya in the wake of a series of bomb explosions in Russia which are blamed on Chechen extremists. His tough line increases his popularity among Russians. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)
Yeltsin resigns and is replaced by Putin as acting president. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)
- 2000**
- March Putin elected president. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)
- August Kursk nuclear submarine sinks in the Barents Sea with the loss of all its crew. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)
- December Soviet anthem reintroduced to replace the one brought in by Yeltsin. New words are written for it by poet Sergey Mikhalkov who penned the Soviet version as well. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)

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2001

July Friendship treaty signed with People's Republic of China during Chinese President Jiang Zemin's visit to Moscow. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)

2002

January Russia's last independent national TV station, TV-6, is forced by the authorities to stop broadcasting, sparking fresh concerns about free speech. It is later awarded a new licence after journalists team up with Kremlin-backed managers and goes back on air in June with the new name TVS. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)

May Russia and the USA announce a new agreement on strategic nuclear weapons reduction. The two sides are to cut their nuclear arsenals from over 6,000 missiles apiece to about 2,000 each in the next 10 years. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)

Russian and NATO foreign ministers agree on the establishment of the Nat-Russia Council in which Russia and the 19 NATO countries will have an equal role in decision-making on policy to counter terrorism and other security threats. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)

August At least 115 people killed when military helicopter crashes in Chechen minefield. Russian military accuses Chechen fighters of shooting it down. Reports suggest overcrowding could have been a contributing factor in the high death toll. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)

October Chechen rebels seize a Moscow theatre and hold about 800 people hostage. Most of the rebels and around 120 hostages are killed when Russian forces storm the building. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)

December Suicide bombers attack the headquarters in Grozny of the Moscow-backed Chechen government. More than 50 people are killed. Separatist rebels claim responsibility. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)

2003

March Russians hail Chechen referendum vote in favour of a new constitution stipulating that the republic is part of the Russian Federation. Human rights groups, among others, are strongly critical of Russia for pushing ahead with referendum before peace has been established. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)

May Over 50 people killed in suicide bombing of Chechen government building in the north of the republic. Just two days later, Chechen administration chief Kadyrov has narrow escape in another suicide attack which leaves over a dozen dead. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)

June Suicide bomber blows up bus carrying military personnel stationed at Mozdok in North Ossetia, Russia's military headquarters for operations in Chechnya. Around twenty people killed. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)

Government cites financial reasons for axing last remaining nationwide independent TV channel, TVS. Liberal observers criticise the move as the latest Kremlin bid to curb media freedom. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)

July Suicide bomb attack at rock festival just outside Moscow kills at least 15, including two bombers. Russia sees passport found on one attacker as evidence of Chechen link. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)

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August	Suicide bomb attack on military hospital at Mozdok, near Chechen border, kills 50 people. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)
September	Kyrgyzstan grants Russia military base at Kant. It will house new Russian rapid reaction force intended to combat terrorism. It is first military base opened by Russia abroad in 13 years of independence. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)
October	Border dispute with Kiev after Russia embarks on building causeway across Kerch Strait between Russian coast and Ukrainian island of Tuzla. Strait separates Black Sea from Azov Sea. Ukraine sends troops to Tuzla. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010) Billionaire Yukos oil boss Mikhail Khodorkovsky arrested and held in custody over investigations into tax evasion and fraud. Mr Khodorkovsky had supported liberal opposition to President Putin. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)
December	More than 40 people killed in bomb attack on passenger train in southern Russia. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010) President Putin gains almost total control over parliament after elections in which Putin-backed United Russia wins landslide. President Putin, President Kuchma of Ukraine sign agreement on joint use of Kerch Strait and status of Azov Sea. Kremlin denies that island of Tuzla featured in talks. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)

2004

February	Suspected suicide bomb attack on Moscow underground train kills about 40 people. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010) President Putin sacks government of Mikhail Kasyanov. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)
March	Mikhail Fradkov becomes prime minister. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010) Mr Putin wins second term as president by landslide. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)
May	Chechen President Akhmad Kadyrov killed in a bomb blast in Grozny. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)
June	Dozens killed in southern republic of Ingushetia in attacks said to have involved hundreds of gunmen. President Putin blames Chechen rebels led by Aslan Maskhadov. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010) Maskhadov's spokesman says operation was led by Ingush commander who fought under Maskhadov in Chechnya and acknowledges participation of Chechen volunteers. Spokesman blames Russian forces for provoking attacks. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)
August	Russian authorities seize assets of Yuganskneftegaz, the key production unit of oil giant Yukos, to offset the latter's reported tax debts. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010) Two passenger aircraft crash within minutes of each other after take-off from Moscow, killing all 89 passengers and crew. Investigators find traces of explosives in the wreckage of both planes and blame terrorists. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010) At least 10 people killed in explosion outside Moscow underground station. Group sympathising with Chechen separatists issues statement saying it carried out the attack. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)

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- September More than 330 people, many of them children, killed when siege at school in North Ossetia ends in bloodbath. President Putin blames international terrorists with links to Chechen separatists. Their leader Aslan Maskhadov condemns the seizure but says it was carried out by "madmen" motivated by a desire to seek revenge for Russian actions against their own loved ones in Chechnya. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)
Mr Putin announces scrapping of direct election of regional governors and plan for them to be Kremlin appointees. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)
- December State oil firm Rosneft buys Yuganskneftegaz. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)

2005

- January At least 20 die in violent incidents in North Caucasus republics of Ingushetia, Dagestan and Kabardino-Balkaria as Russian security forces raid houses in what they describe as operations to capture Chechen separatist fighters. Some observers blame heavy-handed tactics for the deaths. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)
Changes to the benefits system spark protests by thousands of pensioners in many parts of Russia. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)
- February Chechen separatist leader Aslan Maskhadov calls ceasefire and urges the Russian authorities to agree to peace talks. The official Chechen leadership dismisses his overtures and says he should give himself up. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)
Government is embarrassed by but easily survives confidence vote called by communist and nationalist opposition over its handling of benefits reform. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)
Moscow and Tehran sign agreement by which Russia will supply fuel for Iran's Bushehr nuclear reactor and Iran will send spent fuel rods back to Russia. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)
- March Chechen separatist leader Aslan Maskhadov killed in operation by Russian forces. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)
- May Billionaire former Yukos oil boss Mikhail Khodorkovsky is sentenced to nine years in prison over charges including tax evasion and fraud. He appeals but succeeds only in having sentence cut by a year. He is later sent to serve it in a Siberian penal colony. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)
- June State gains control of Gazprom gas giant by increasing its stake in the company to over 50%. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)
Russia withdraws from border treaty signed with Estonia after the Estonian parliament introduces reference to Soviet occupation before ratifying. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)
At least 10 Russian servicemen die in bomb blast in Dagestani capital, Makhachkala. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)
- July About 15 people killed as armoured police vehicle blown up north of Chechen capital. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)
- August Seven submariners rescued after their craft spends 76 hours trapped on the seabed. Russia thanks UK rescue team. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)
- September Russia and Germany sign major deal to build gas pipeline under Baltic Sea between the two countries. Gazprom gains overwhelming control of Sibneft oil company by buying out businessman Roman Abramovich for 13 billion dollars. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)

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October	Dozens are killed during clashes between police and militants in Nalchik, the capital of the North Caucasus republic of Kabardino-Balkaria. Chechen warlord Shamil Basayev issues statement saying he was in overall command of rebel forces. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010) Russia cut gas supplies to Ukraine, citing market rules. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)
2006	
January	Russia briefly cuts supply of gas for Ukrainian use in row over prices. Moscow says its reasons are purely economic but Kiev says they are political. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010) Putin signs controversial law giving authorities extensive new powers to monitor the activities of non-governmental organisations and suspend them if they are found to pose a threat. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)
February	At least a dozen Chechen rebel fighters and several members of Russian security forces killed in gun battle in village in Stavropol region, just across border from Chechnya. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010) Roof collapses at a food market in Moscow, killing up to 65 people. Many of the dead are Azerbaijani immigrants. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)
March	President Putin visits Beijing and signs range of economic agreements, including deal on future supply of Russian gas to China. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)
June	Four Russian diplomats kidnapped and killed in Iraq by insurgents demanding Russian withdrawal from Chechnya. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010) President Putin orders security services to find and "destroy" the killers.
July	Rouble becomes convertible currency. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010) Russia's most-wanted man, Chechen warlord Shamil Basayev, is killed in what the security services describe as a special operation. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010) Yukos oil company mounts legal challenge as Russia's state oil firm Rosneft floated on London stock exchange. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)
August	Russian plane crashes north of the Ukrainian city of Donetsk, killing all 170 on board. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010) Three students charged with racially-motivated crime after bomb at Moscow market kills 11 people, mostly Central Asian. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)
September	Bar brawl in Karelian town of Kondopoga in which two Russians die escalates into race riots with demands for eviction of all natives of the Caucasus. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010) 25 die in fire at British-owned Siberian gold mine. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010) Senior officers among 11 killed as military helicopter goes down in North Ossetia. Russians blame pilot error. Islamist rebels say they shot it down. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)
October	Amid tension over Georgia's breakaway regions and its ties with NATO, Moscow's relations with Tbilisi deteriorate sharply when four Russian army officers are briefly detained there on spying charges. Russia imposes sanctions and expels hundreds of Georgians whom it accuses of being illegal immigrants. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)

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- November Former Russian security service officer Aleksandr Litvinenko, an outspoken critic of the Kremlin living in exile in London, dies there after being poisoned by a radioactive substance. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)
- December After tense negotiations during which Moscow threatened to cut supplies to Belarus, new gas deal signed with Minsk more than doubling the price and phasing in further increases over next four years. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)

2007

- January Russia cuts supply along oil export pipeline through Belarus to Europe amidst row with Minsk over taxation and allegations of illegal siphoning of oil. The dispute is resolved after Belarus cancels a transit tax and Russia agrees to cut oil export duties. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)
- March Dozens detained as riot police break up St Petersburg protest by demonstrators accusing President Putin of stifling democracy. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)
- April Police in central Moscow prevent opposition activists from holding a banned rally against President Putin. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)
Former President Yeltsin dies. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)
Row with Estonia after Estonian authorities relocate a Soviet World War II monument in the capital Tallinn. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)
- May Russia test fires a long-distance missile. President Putin talks of a new arms race, with the US planning to expand its missile defences into Eastern Europe. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)
- June President Putin suggests Russia and the US resolve their dispute over missile defence by developing a joint shield which would use the Qabala radar station in Azerbaijan. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)
- July Diplomatic row between London and Moscow over Britain's bid for the extradition of Andrei Lugovoi, an ex-KGB agent accused of Mr Litvinenko's murder. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)
- August Russia mounts an Arctic expedition apparently aimed at expanding its territorial claims and plants a flag on the seabed at the North Pole. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)
- November President Putin signs law suspending Russia's participation in the 1990 Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) treaty that limits the deployment of heavy military equipment across Europe. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)
- December President Putin's United Russia party wins a landslide victory in parliamentary elections, which Western critics describe as neither free nor democratic. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)

2008

- January The British Council, which promotes ties between Britain and other countries, suspends work at two offices amid ongoing tension between London and Moscow. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)
Russia revives Soviet-era Atlantic navy exercises in neutral waters in the Bay of Biscay off France, in what is seen as a demonstration of resurgent military muscle. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)
- March Dmitry Medvedev wins presidential elections. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)

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April	Russian-Georgian tension rises over Georgia's breakaway region of Abkhazia. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)
May	Dmitry Medvedev takes over as president from Vladimir Putin, who becomes prime minister. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)
	The UN backs a Georgian claim that Russia shot down one of its unmanned drones over Abkhazia. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)
August	Tensions between Russia and Georgia escalate into a full-blown military conflict after Georgian troops mount an attack on separatist forces in South Ossetia. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)
	Russia says its citizens are under attack and pours thousands of troops into South Ossetia, ejecting Georgian troops. It also launches bombing raids on targets in other parts of Georgia, and moves troops deeper into Georgian territory.
	After more than a week of hostilities, the two sides sign a French-brokered peace agreement. Russia withdraws its combat troops from Georgian territory outside Abkhazia and South Ossetia.
	President Medvedev formally recognises the independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, drawing further protests from the West and Georgia. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)
September	Share prices fall dramatically at the Moscow stock exchange as Russia is hit by the world financial crisis and a sudden fall in oil prices. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)
October	The Russian parliament approves a \$68bn package of measures to help banks hit by the global credit crunch. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)
	A Moscow court throws out most of a series of tax demands made against the British Council at the height of UK-Russian tensions over the killing of former intelligence officer Alexander Litvinenko in 2006. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)
November	President Medvedev, in his first annual state-of-the-nation address, says that Moscow will deploy short-range missiles in the Kaliningrad enclave to counter America's proposed missile shield in central Europe. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)
	Parliament votes overwhelmingly in favour of a bill that would extend the next president's term of office from four to six years. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)

2009

January	Russia stops gas supplies to Ukraine after the collapse of talks to resolve a row over unpaid bills and gas prices. Supplies to southeastern Europe are disrupted for several weeks as a result of the dispute. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)
	Russia's military says it is halting plans to deploy short-range missile to Kaliningrad enclave, in response to what it described as a change of US attitude under newly-inaugurated President Barack Obama. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)
April	Russia ends "counterterrorism operation" against separatist rebels in Chechnya, one month after President Medvedev said life in the republic had "normalised to a large degree". [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)
July	President Medvedev and Barack Obama, on his first official visit to Moscow, reach an outline agreement to cut back their countries' stockpiles of nuclear weapons, in a move aimed at replacing the 1991 Start 1 treaty. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)

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September	President Medvedev welcomes the US decision to shelve controversial missile defence bases in Poland and the Czech Republic. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)
October	Opposition parties accuse the authorities of rigging local elections as the governing United Russia party wins every poll by a wide margin. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)
November	Dozens are killed when a bomb blast causes the derailment of a Moscow-St Petersburg express train. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)

2010

March	Thirty-nine people are killed and more than 60 injured in two suicide bomb attacks on the Moscow Metro. The government blames Muslim militants from the North Caucasus. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)
April	President Medvedev signs a new strategic arms agreement with his US counterpart Barack Obama. The new Start deal commits the former Cold War foes to cut arsenals of deployed nuclear warheads by about 30 percent. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)
June	Presidents Medvedev and Obama mark warming in ties on the Russian leader's first visit to the White House. Obama says the US will back Russia's World Trade Organisation accession, and Russia will allow the US to resume poultry exports. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010) Prime Minister Vladimir Putin hopes arrests of 10 alleged Russian spies in the US will not harm US-Russian relations.
July	US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton says Washington remains committed to positive ties with Russia despite arrest of alleged spies. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010) A customs union between Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan comes into force despite Belarusian complaints about Russia retaining duties on oil and gas exports to its neighbours. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)
August	A spate of wildfires triggered by a severe heat wave kills dozens of people and devastates crops. Russia - which in 2009 was the world's third largest wheat exporter - imposes a ban on grain exports, pushing worldwide wheat prices up to a two-year high. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)
September	Prime Minister Putin hints that he might stand for the presidency again in 2012 in comments to foreign reporters and scholars. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010) A suicide bomb attack on a market in the Caucasus city of Vladikavkaz kills 16, injures more than 100 and starts a debate about the success of measures to quell Islamist armed groups in the south. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010) Russia and Norway sign an agreement to delineate their Arctic maritime border, thereby opening up the possible exploitation of oil and gas fields on the sea bed. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)
October	President Medvedev sacks the powerful mayor of Moscow, Yuri Luzhkov, after weeks of criticism of the from Kremlin. Mr Luzhkov had been in office since 1992. [10a] (BBC Timeline on Russia, 15 September 2010)

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Annex B

POLITICAL ORGANISATIONS

Legislation approved in 2004 required each political party to have at least 50,000 members, including no fewer than 500 members resident in at least one-half of the subjects (territorial units) of the Federation, with at least 250 members in each of the remaining regions, in order to register and to function legally. Based on the requirements of the amended legislation, only 11 parties were officially registered to contest elections to the Gosudarstvennaya Duma in December 2007. The following were the principal parties to be officially registered in mid-2010.

Communist Party of the Russian Federation (CPRF) (Kommunisticheskaya partiya Rossiiskoi Federatsii) (KPRF)

Founded 1993; claims succession to the Russian Communist Party, which was banned in 1991. Chair. of Central Committee Gennadii A. Zyuganov.

184,181 mems (2006)

(Europa World - Date accessed 13 September 2010) [2a]

A Just Russia (AJR) (Spravedlivaya Rossiya)

Founded 2006 by merger of Motherland, Russian Party of Life and Russian Pensioners' Party; absorbed People's Party of the Russian Federation in Apr. 2007; statist, patriotic party.

Chair. Sergei M. Mironov.

(Europa World - Date accessed 13 September 2010) [2a]

Liberal Democratic Party of Russia (LDPR) (Liberalno-demokraticeskaya partiya Rossii)

Founded 1988; nationalist.

Chair. Vladimir V. Zhirinovskii.

180,000 mems (2008)

(Europa World - Date accessed 13 September 2010) [2a]

Patriots of Russia (Patrioty Rossii)

Founded 2002; fmrly Russian Party of Labour.

Leader Gennadii Yu. Semigin.

(Europa World - Date accessed 13 September 2010) [2a]

The Right Cause (Pravoye Delo)

Founded 2008, registered 2009 by fmr mems of Union of Rightist Forces, Civic Force and the Democratic Party of Russia; economically liberal.

Co-Chair. of Federal Political Council Georgii Bovt, Leonid Ya. Gozman.

56,000 mems (2009)

(Europa World - Date accessed 13 September 2010) [2a]

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United Russia (UR) (Yedinaya Rossiya)

Founded 2001 as Unity and Fatherland—United Russia, on the basis of Unity (f. 1999, incorporating Our Home is Russia), Fatherland (f. 1999, and led by Mayor of Moscow Yuriy Luzhkov) and the All Russia grouping of regional governors; pragmatic centrist grouping that promotes moderate economic reforms and a strong state; absorbed Agrarian Party of Russia in Oct. 2008.

Chair. Vladimir V. Putin.

Chair. of Supreme Council Boris V. Gryzlov.

659,654 mems (2006)

(Europa World - Date accessed 13 September 2010) [2a]

Yabloko Russian United Democratic Party (Rossiiskaya obyyedinennaya demokraticeskaya partiya `Yabloko')

Founded 1993 on the basis of the Yavlinskii-Boldyrev-Lukin electoral bloc; present name adopted 2008; democratic, politically and socially liberal.

Chair. Sergei S. Mitrokhin.

60,440 mems (2006)

(Europa World - Date accessed 13 September 2010) [2a]

Information on other political organisations and pressure groups can be found in the [CIA World Factbook](#), updated on 24 June 2010. [3a]

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Annex C

PROMINENT PEOPLE

May 2010

President

Dmitrii A. Medvedev

Chairman/Prime Minister

Vladimir V. Putin

First Deputy Chairman

Viktor A. Zubkov

First Deputy Chairman

Igor I. Shuvalov

Deputy Chairman

Aleksandr D. Zhukov

Deputy Chairman

Sergei B. Ivanov

Deputy Chairman

Dmitrii N. Kozak

Deputy Chairman, Minister of Finance

Aleksei L. Kudrin

Deputy Chairman

Igor I. Sechin

Deputy Chairman, Head of the Government Staff

Sergei S. Sobyenin

Deputy Chairman, Presidential

Aleksandr G. Khloponin

Representative to the North Caucasus

Federal Okrug

Minister of Agriculture

Yelena B. Skrynnik

Minister of Civil Defence, Emergencies and Clean-up Operations

Col-Gen. Sergei K. Shoigu

Minister of Communications and the Mass Media

Igor O. Shchegolev

Minister of Culture

Aleksandr A. Avdeyev

Minister of Defence

Anatolii E. Serdyukov

Minister of Economic Development

Elvira S. Nabiullina

Minister of Education and Science

Andrei A. Fursenko

Minister of Energy

Sergei I. Shmatko

Minister of Foreign Affairs

Sergei V. Lavrov

Minister of Health and Social Development

Tatyana A. Golikova

Minister of Industry and Trade

Viktor B. Khristenko

Minister of Internal Affairs

Col-Gen. Rashid G. Nurgaliyev

Minister of Justice

Aleksandr V. Konovalov

Minister of Natural Resources and Ecology

Yurii P. Trutnev

Minister of Regional Development

Viktor F. Basargin

Minister of Sport, Tourism and Youth Policy

Vitalii L. Mutko

Minister of Transport

Igor Ye. Levitin

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PROMINENT PEOPLE OUTSIDE OF THE GOVERNMENT

A comprehensive list of prominent people, past and present, can be found at:

<http://www.russia-ic.com/people/general/> [9b]

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Annex D

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AI	Amnesty International
CEDAW	Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CPJ	Committee to Protect Journalists
EU	European Union
FCO	Foreign and Commonwealth Office (UK)
FH	Freedom House
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
HRW	Human Rights Watch
ICG	International Crisis Group
ICRC	International Committee for Red Cross
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
MSF	Médecins sans Frontières
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
ODIHR	Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
ODPR	Office for Displaced Persons and Refugees
OECD	Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe
RSF	Reporters sans Frontières
STD	Sexually Transmitted Disease
STC	Save The Children
TB	Tuberculosis
TI	Transparency International
UN	United Nations
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNHCHR	United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USSD	United States State Department
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization

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