

Corruption Rating Barely Changed

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Members of Moscow's notoriously corrupt police force patrolling Red Square. **A. Makhonin**

Despite President Dmitry Medvedev's efforts to fight corruption, the country remains firmly rooted in the bottom league of Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions [Index](#), which was released Tuesday.

Russia made it only to 154th place on the 178-country survey, scoring evenly with nine other countries ranging from Cambodia to Tajikistan that scored 2.1 points from a possible 10.

Corruption Index Rankings

Rank	Country	Score '10	Score '09	Score '08
1	Denmark	9.3	9.3	9.3
1	New Zealand	9.3	9.4	9.3
1	Singapore	9.3	9.2	9.2
4	Finland	9.2	8.9	9.0
4	Sweden	9.2	9.2	9.3
26	Estonia	6.5	6.6	6.6

46	Lithuania	5.0	4.9	4.6
59	Latvia	4.3	4.5	5.0
68	Georgia	3.8	4.1	3.9
105	Kazakhstan	2.9	2.7	2.2
105	Moldova	2.9	3.3	2.9
123	Armenia	2.6	2.7	2.9
127	Belarus	2.5	2.4	2.0
134	Azerbaijan	2.4	2.3	1.9
134	Ukraine	2.4	2.2	2.5
154	Russia	2.1	2.2	2.1
154	Tajikistan	2.1	2.0	2.0
164	Kyrgyzstan	2.0	1.9	1.8
172	Turkmenistan	1.6	1.8	1.8
172	Uzbekistan	1.6	1.7	1.8
175	Iraq	1.5	1.5	1.3
176	Afghanistan	1.4	1.3	1.5
176	Myanmar	1.4	1.4	1.3
178	Somalia	1.1	1.1	1.0

— *Transparency International*

The result was the worst among the Group of 20 nations, with the next-worst performing member Indonesia in 110th place, making Russia the most corrupt major economy.

Among post-Soviet countries, only Kyrgyzstan (164th), Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan (both at 172nd) fared worse, while the Baltic countries were in the lead.

The index, based on surveys of businesspeople and governance experts, is published annually by the Berlin-based anti-corruption watchdog and is among the world's most-quoted surveys on corruption.

Russia's performance was only slightly worse than the 2.2 points it scored in 2009. The resulting eight-spot drop in the overall rankings, from last year's 146th, was mainly because so many countries scored similarly, Transparency said.

"There are no significant changes. Regarding corruption, everything remains just as bad as it was," the organization's Moscow office said in an e-mailed press release.

Transparency's country representative, Yelena Panfilova, said the Kremlin's anti-corruption efforts continued to impress on paper but rang hollow in practice.

"Yes, corrupt officials are exposed and cases investigated, but the real number of sentences has not risen," she said in the statement.

Panfilova, who is also a member of Medvedev's Human Rights Council, said two high-profile corruption cases should show in the near future whether the country was able break through what she called "a wall of untouchables."

She said she hoped that authorities would show resolve to investigate both the Daimler and Magnitsky cases without protecting high-level officials who may have been involved.

German carmaker Daimler admitted in April to paying more than \$6.4 million in kickbacks to state-connected firms and officials. Sergei Magnitsky, a lawyer for the Hermitage Capital fund, died in detention last year after being accused of tax evasion — charges that his supporters say were politically motivated.

Mikhail Fedotov, the newly appointed head of the presidential human rights council, told The Moscow Times that the fight against corruption would continue in full force, but that quick changes could not be expected as long as key elements for success were missing.

"We need an independent judiciary and independent law enforcement agencies," he said. (Comment, Page 8.)

Medvedev has given priority to both points this year, but his bill for a wide-ranging police reform has been subject to much criticism and has yet to reach the State Duma.

Fedotov added that while there was political will on Medvedev's part, another shortcoming was a lack of real political competition.

But Sergei Markov, a Duma deputy for United Russia and political pundit, said Transparency's methods were doubtful.

"Russia always fares bad in those surveys because Russia's image is bad," he said.

Yet he added that the country could learn from some of its strongest critics, saying Georgia has done well in reforming its police.

"[Georgian] President Mikheil Saakashvili may be a war criminal, but he has fought corruption effectively," Markov said.

Georgia made it to 68th place in the Transparency Index, scoring 3.8 points.

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