

U.S. Slams Russia on Rights

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The  Moscow Times

Russia, Ukraine and Belarus are the three European countries with the worst record on human rights in 2010, the U.S. State Department said in an annual [survey](#) released Friday.

The survey, "2010 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices," covered 194 countries worldwide, excluding the United States. It listed Russia and Belarus as countries where "abuses were especially serious," and highlighted Ukraine because it said the situation there has deteriorated after years of improvement.

The Russian government infringed on civil and political freedoms by "detaining certain demonstrators and pressuring select NGOs, independent media, some religious minorities, independent labor unions and political opposition," the report said.

Attacks on journalists and activists continued, as have physical abuse by law enforcement agencies and deaths caused by military hazing and harsh prison conditions. Corruption and regular violations of the rule of law have also played a role, the survey said.

The report also criticized the ongoing armed conflict in the North Caucasus and the politically tinged case of jailed former Yukos CEO Mikhail Khodorkovsky.

Ukraine saw a negative trend "due to problematic local elections, intimidation of the media, and perceived selective prosecution of opposition figures," the report said.

The situation was even worse in Belarus, where the number of political prisoners grew in the wake of a "flawed" presidential election that reinstated incumbent Alexander Lukashenko to power in December.

The head of the Kremlin's human rights council, Mikhail Fedotov, said the report was "propaganda material" but nevertheless promised that the council would look into "mistakes" raised by the document, Interfax reported.

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