

Medvedev Suggests Hiking Fines to \$16,000 for Traffic Offenses

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev suggested hiking fines for traffic offenses in Moscow and St. Petersburg to as much as 500,000 rubles (\$16,100) in a video blog posted on his official website over the weekend.

The proposals, which provoked a heated debate on Russian social networks and online forums, came halfway through an almost 10-minute clip that began with Medvedev driving up to the cameras in an exclusive BMW X5 SUV.

"We plan to strengthen punishments for drivers who break the speed limit, run a red light or drive into the oncoming lane," Medvedev said, adding that the proposals were still being discussed.

"The punishments for these offenses will be determined by taking into account people's means. For instance, for Moscow and St. Petersburg this could reach 500,000 rubles, and for

other regions 250,000 rubles," he said.

In the video, Medvedev road-safety cited statistics pointing to a decline in the number of deadly crashes in Russia. Nevertheless, Russia's safety record remains awful, he said.

"Reports about terrible road traffic accidents, including flagrant ones like crashing into people at bus stops and ones in which children die appear almost every week, if not several times a week. Pavements have even become dangerous."

Despite Medvedev's apparent concern, Russian bloggers and politicians rushed to criticize the premier's proposals, which come amid a government-backed campaign to clamp down on traffic violations after a series of lethal crashes received extensive coverage in national media.

"If they pass this law, I'll sell my car," user al.budr wrote on an online forum, according to Argumenty i Fakty. Another user wrote that he would only agree to the higher fines if officials convicted of corruption had their hands chopped off, the newspaper reported.

Commenting on the proposals Saturday, billionaire businessman and former presidential hopeful Mikhail Prokhorov said that he'd like to see Medvedev fined 500,000 rubles every time he broke traffic rules and caused hourlong jams on his way to work.

Instead of raising fines, Prokhorov said in a blog post that authorities should start by upgrading Russia's roads. <http://md-prokhorov.livejournal.com/>

"Half of all accidents happen due to the poor quality of our roads, potholes, the lack of road markings and incorrectly built crossings. There are many situations when it's simply impossible to drive without breaking traffic rules," he said.

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