

Press Freedom Declined Amid Repression in 2012, Report Says

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Press freedom in Russia continued to decline last year, Reporters Without Borders said Wednesday.

The country dropped six points in the organization's World Press Freedom Index, finishing in 148th place among 179. Russia's rating is slightly better than Singapore's and slightly worse than that of the Philippines, according to the report, [published](#) online.

The Paris-based watchdog said that "repression has been stepped up in response to an unprecedented wave of opposition protests" since Vladimir Putin's return to the presidency last year. It added that the country continues to be marked "by an unacceptable failure to punish all those who have murdered or attacked journalists."

The country's press freedom is only slightly better than in neighboring Azerbaijan (156th, +6) and Belarus (157th, +11), both of whom moved up six and eleven points, respectively, after

dropping last year because of violent opposition crackdowns.

The best result among former Soviet republics is Estonia, which finished 11th, followed by the other Baltic states, Lithuania (33) and Latvia (39).

Moldova (55), Armenia (74), Georgia (100) and Kyrgyzstan (106) were the only other post-Soviet countries that got a "noticeable problems" ranking, while the rest were ranked as having a "difficult situation."

The region's worst ratings again went to Turkmenistan (177), which finished just in front of North Korea and Eritrea, the two at the bottom of the list.

The freest countries are Finland, the Netherlands, Norway and Luxembourg.

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