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Former Finance Minister Kudrin Proposes Major Reform of Law Enforcement

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Former Finance Minister Alexei Kudrin will present a proposal Monday to completely restructure Russia's law enforcement system through the creation of independent municipal, regional and federal authorities.

The reforms were formulated by The Institute for the Rule of Law at the European University in St. Petersburg and anti-corruption NGO the Indem Foundation, fulfilling a request by Kudrin's Civil Initiatives Committee, Vedomosti reported.

The current system hampers economic growth and engenders social instability, the report says, listing over-centralization, selective reporting of offenses, a tendency to ignore difficult cases and a lack of social feedback and control as key factors undermining the system's efficacy.

The reforms propose abolishing the keystones of the current system — the Investigative Committee, Interior Ministry and Federal Drug Control Service — and redistributing their resources and responsibilities among the three new levels.

The federal police would investigate major crimes and the fight against international, intra-regional and organized crime. Regional police would control traffic, protect government buildings and prosecute minor offenses, while the municipal branches would be charged with maintaining public order, preventing crime and registering offenses.

The report also proposes creating two new independent federal agencies, one for the investigation of crimes committed by state officials and another for maintaining criminal statistics.

Simultaneously, the authors suggest transferring peripheral functions currently performed by law enforcement to other areas of government, for instance, passing on licensing operations to the Justice Ministry and control of the country's internal security forces to the Defense Ministry, Interfax reported.

The reforms would not require additional financing, the report says, as the new organizations would be built on the foundations of the existing ones, and all current employees would be offered new positions.

The authors employed public surveys, analysis of police operations and in-depth interviews with judges and law enforcement officials while drawing up the proposal.

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