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Putin and Medvedev Lament Rusty Tap Water in Their Houses

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President Vladimir Putin pours a cup of tea, hopefully rust-free.

Russia's top brass are not immune from the same problems faced by ordinary Russians, it turns out, after the president and prime minister admitted to having rusty tap water from time to time.

"Can you imagine: Even my tap water is sometimes rusty," President Vladimir Putin said Thursday at a conference of the pro-presidential All-Russia People's Front, commenting on the country's notorious public utilities.

In an apparent show of empathy, Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev on Friday confessed to having the same problem. "If the president says that rusty water periodically pours from his tap, then the same is true for me; we live nearby one another — we're practically neighbors," he said.

It is not uncommon in Russia for orange or brown water to gush out of the hot tap due to rusted pipes.

Putin acknowledged the impact of public utilities on people's everyday lives, and asked the All-Russia People's Front, which he heads, to draft a bill on control of the utilities sphere.

"Give me a draft law. I promise you, we will finalize it together, together with the expert community and we'll definitely get it through parliament," he told the organization, founded to unite civic activists loyal to the government.

A spokesman for the Federal Guard Service, which is tasked with protecting Putin and other top officials, told the Moskovsky Komsomolets tabloid that rusty water may flow from Putin's taps when maintenance work is being carried out, but insisted that the water still conforms to sanitary norms.

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