

1,700 Amnestied, Budget Gets \$52M

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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An amnesty for economic crimes has benefited less than 1,700 people but has added 1.7 billion rubles (\$51.8 million) to the state coffers, amounting to about 1 million rubles for every person freed, Vedomosti reported Tuesday.

The amnesty, which lasted six months and formally ended Jan. 4, has affected 1,658 people, who paid compensation to the state for their crimes, in cash or property, business ombudsman Boris Titov said last Thursday.

The head of the Duma's Legislative Committee, Pavel Krasheninnikov, had originally estimated the number of businessmen eligible for amnesty closer to 10,000, though federal officials said the process would be slowed given that those eligible were at different stages of the criminal process.

Furthermore, not every economic article of the Criminal Code, under which some businessmen were punishable, was covered in the amnesty, while some of the convicted businessmen were unwilling to pay the compensation, said Yana Yakovleva, a representative

of the nongovernmental organization Business Solidarity.

Those eligible for amnesty could continue to wait for a court decision to prove their innocence, though this would become a moot point if payment of compensation to the budget was made. A total of 766 people took the latter route, paying a total of 1.44 billion rubles (\$42 million) — or more than four-fifths of the total received by the state — in the preliminary stages of investigation.

Court decisions and bailiffs bought in a further 6.1 million rubles while compensation totaling 278 million rubles resulted from legal proceedings.

For many businessmen, payment of compensation to the state was preferable to attempting to otherwise bribe their way to a positive verdict — which could have amounted, on average, to about 1 million rubles in Moscow, and from 2 to 3 million rubles in the regions — given that the amnesty payments were at least legal, Yakovleva said.

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