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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Russian Prostitutes Hike Rates Over Slumping Ruble — Media

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In the Urals, sex workers have raised prices by between 50 and 100 percent.

Getting laid in Russia just became more expensive.

The crime of buying sexual services is becoming more expensive in Russia as prostitutes increase their rates to offset the free-falling ruble, regional media reported.

An escort agency in the northern port of Murmansk has raised prices by 30 to 40 percent, news website Flashnord.com reported.

The pre-crisis price was 3,000 to 7,000 rubles ($55 to $130 at Thursday's rate) per two hours of "spending time with an agency employee," Flashnord said Tuesday.

The price will likely be pegged to the dollar in the future, the website said. Though prostitution is illegal in Russia, the report gave the name of the alleged brothel, Madlen.

A representative of another "escort salon" named World of Sex in Murmansk was cited as saying that the enterprise "is trying to keep prices as they were, but life's getting more

expensive, and girls can't work at a loss."

In the Urals, sex workers have raised prices by between 50 and 100 percent, Uralpolit.ru said Wednesday, citing unnamed clients of prostitutes.

In addition to the falling ruble, the sex tariff inflation may have been boosted by an influx of sex workers fleeing war-torn Ukraine, the website said. The new competition is forcing local sex workers to hike their rates in order to pay their bills, the report said.

The ruble has lost almost 40 percent of its value against the dollar since the start of the year due to an economic downturn.

Sex workers make up about 1 million of Russia's 142 million population, Deputy Interior Minister Igor Zubov said last year.

Prostitution is punishable with a fine of up to 2,000 rubles ($37) in Russia. Pimps face up to a decade behind bars.

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