

The Highlights of Putin's Presser in Quotes

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Russian President Vladimir Putin (C) attends his annual end-of-year news conference in Moscow, on Dec. 18, 2014.

President Vladimir Putin held his annual end-of-year news conference on Thursday. Below is a collection of the highlights from his news conference.

On Ukraine:

"We assume the crisis should be solved, the sooner the better."

"It should be solved through political measures, not with the pressure ... of an economic blockade or the use of armed forces."

"We assume a general political space will be re-established. It's hard to say now what it would be. But it seems this is what we should aim at. Both sides [of the conflict] should aim at that — both."

"People living in southeast Ukraine should be respected."

"In our view, this really is a punitive operation carried out by Kiev [in east Ukraine]."

"I think all [prisoners of war] should be swapped without any conditions."

On NATO:

"Didn't they tell us after the collapse of the Berlin Wall that NATO would not expand eastward? But it happened immediately."

On the Economy:

"Clearly the current situation is caused mainly by external factors."

"External economic factors are having an impact, mainly the price of oil and gas. I think the Central Bank and the government are taking adequate measures."

"If the situation develops unfavorably, we will have to amend our plans. Beyond a doubt, we will have to cut some [spending]. But a positive turn and an exit from the current situation are unavoidable."

"The growth of the global economy will continue, and our economy will rebound from the current situation."

"Under the most unfavorable external economic scenario, this situation may go on for about two years. But it may also start improving in the first quarter, in the middle [or] at the end of the next year."

"One way or another, the economy will adapt to living and working with low energy prices."

"Gross domestic product growth in the first 10 months of this year stood at 0.7 percent, maybe 0.6 percent."

"Current external conditions are spurring us on, will make us more effective, switch us to a path of more innovative development."

"We must guarantee private property, stop chasing people with the help of law enforcement agencies."

On the Central Bank and Rates:

"I think some actions could have been taken more swiftly."

"I hope the main interest rate will not remain [at its current level] throughout these difficult times, which are related to external economic conditions."

"Surely, one can give a hard time to [Central Bank chief] Nabiullina, but one should remember that, in general, their policies are adequate. The Central Bank is not the only one to be held responsible for the current situation in the country."

"The Central Bank, as far as I know, does not plan to limit our exporters on some indicators. And it is right."

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