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Average Cost of Bribe in Russia Spiked in 2014 Amid Ruble Crisis

By The Moscow Times

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The average cost of a bribe in Moscow rose 37 percent last year to hit 327,000 rubles ($5,250), according to Moscow police chief Anatoly Yakunin, news agency Interfax reported on Wednesday.

The typical cost of a bribe in Russia's regions, which are far poorer than Moscow, stood at 139,000 rubles ($2,230) said Yakunin, citing a recent study completed by Moscow's police.

Corruption overall cost Russia's budget about 47 billion rubles ($762 million) last year, he added.

Speaking to newspaper Kommersant on Wednesday, Yakunin said that the steep rise in bribery rates was tied the ruble's volatility, as most bribes are paid in U.S. dollars and euros.

The ruble has fallen over 40 percent to the greenback since last summer and over 30 percent

to the euro, weighed down by Western sanctions and the falling price of oil.

The police chief also attributed the rise in prices to the government's successes in battling corruption. As the government's renewed focus on the issue rose, the cost of a bribe went up, he said.

According to the Moscow police report the biggest bribery cases investigated by law enforcement officials last year typically involved officials accepting money to overlook administrative violations or to protect businesses employing illegal migrant workers.

The average price of bribes far outpaced the average salary for a Moscow resident, which is 50,000 rubles ($800) a month, Maxim Reshetnikov, head of Moscow's economic policy department, was quoted by the TASS news agency as saying last year.

Average salaries Russia-wide are about 32,000 rubles a month ($513), Reshetnikov said.

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