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Mayor Sobyanin to Fire 30% of Moscow Officials by July

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Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyanin

Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyanin has decreed that nearly one-third of the city's officials will be laid off by July 1 as the country grapples with a severe economic downturn, according to a statement released Tuesday by City Hall.

Sobyanin has also signed a decree to lower the salaries of Moscow officials — himself included — by 10 percent, the statement said.

"We see an opportunity to reduce the total number of staff by about 30 percent. This is the largest reduction since the time of perestroika," Sobyanin was quoted as saying. "It will be necessary to cut more than 3,000 civil servants."

He said that while Moscow already boasts the country's lowest number of municipal officials per resident, bureaucratic staff can still be cut as related procedures are moved online.

Sobyanin has also recommended that the Moscow City Duma, the city's election commission,

its human rights authority and its consumer rights authority find ways to reduce salaries and staff, the statement said.

President Vladimir Putin earlier this month reduced his own salary by 10 percent, as well as those of Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev, Prosecutor General Yury Chaika and Investigative Committee chairman Alexander Bastrykin, the Interfax news agency reported.

More than 30 Russian regions have announced that they are also preparing to downsize their official workforces, some by up to 20 percent, in an ongoing effort to cut spending, the report said.

Russia's already stagnating economy has been crippled over the past year by a halving of the price of oil — the country's main export — and sanctions imposed by Western governments over Russia's perceived role in the Ukraine crisis.

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