

Russian Budget Sees Customs Income Slashed

By [The Moscow Times](#)

June 23, 2015



Customs duties will bring far less money into the Russian federal budget this year, news agency TASS reported a top official as saying Tuesday, even as the government slashes spending in order to survive an expected economic contraction.

The Federal Customs Service sent on 34.5 percent less to the federal budget in the first five months of the year, or around 1.8 trillion rubles (\$33 billion), agency head Andrei Belyaninov said, news agency TASS reported.

The sharp drop has forced the service to revise its figures for the year, Belyaninov added, without specifying by how much.

"We have corrected the scheduled transfer program for the year, because the reality didn't harmonize with the plan," Belyaninov said.

Belyaninov estimated in April that the federal budget would rake in 5.7 trillion rubles (\$105

billion) in revenues from customs duties this year, a figure that was itself down nearly 20 percent compared to the year before.

The drop in revenue comes as Russia's government works to trim its budget across the board by 10 percent as low oil prices and Western sanctions over the Ukraine crisis fuel an expected recession of around 3 percent this year.

Russia's plummeting customs revenue tracks a steep fall in imports amid the devaluation of the ruble currency and a sanctions cross fire between Moscow and the West that has cut off imports of a number of goods.

Import falls have been particularly heavy in the categories of food products and cars, with imports of the latter plummeting 54 percent in the first four months of the year according to data from the Federal Customs Service, news website Lenta reported.

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