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# Real Incomes 'Barely Budged' in 2018, Chief Auditor Says

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**Artyom Geodakyan / TASS**

Russians saw virtually no change in their purchasing power as prices outpaced growth estimates in 2018, the country's chief auditor has said.

Economists say 2018 was the fifth consecutive year of falling real disposable personal incomes in Russia. They are set to drop again this year.

"Citizens' real incomes increased by decimal points, if they grew at all," head of the Audit Chamber Alexei Kudrin tweeted Wednesday.

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His office's preliminary estimate places real inflation-adjusted income at between 0.0 percent to 0.4 percent.

The Audit Chamber estimates that Russia's GDP grew in 2018 at 1.5 percent, against an official forecast of 1.8 percent. Inflation outpaced forecasts of 2.7 percent, totaling 4.2 percent, the Audit Chamber says.

"The government has to begin at a low starting point [in 2019]," Kudrin concluded.

Russia's statistics agency Rosstat is scheduled to publish the annual 2018 figures on Jan. 25. The agency's head was replaced in December with government vows to overhaul its data-gathering methods.

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