

Having an Honest Business Is Not Possible in Russia, Majority Says

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A majority of Russians say that doing business in the country without breaking a few rules is impossible, according to a newly released state-funded survey.

The poll was carried out a day after Michael Calvey, a U.S. citizen and one of the biggest private equity investors in Russia, was detained on suspicion of embezzling \$37.7 million. Senior figures in the pro-business wing of Russia's ruling establishment have vouched for Calvey as an upstanding investor.

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Sixty-two percent of Russian respondents said it is impossible to conduct honest business in Russia "without hiding anything or deceiving anyone," while 34 percent held a more positive view, the state-funded VTsIOM pollster [said](#) Wednesday.

Respondents cited taxes, red tape and large expenses – at 25 percent, 22 percent and 16 percent each – as the biggest obstacles to opening a business in Russia. Corruption placed fourth at 9 percent and administrative barriers fifth at 8 percent.

“The existing state regulatory system simply doesn’t let private business to be conducted without violating something,” Kremlin business ombudsman Boris Titov was [quoted](#) as saying in response to the results by the RBC news website.

Meanwhile, a majority of VTsIOM respondents have said they are not interested in opening a business, at 63 percent, against 25 percent that say they are interested and 10 percent who said they already have a business.

VTsIOM conducted the survey among 1,600 Russian respondents on Feb. 16.

Reuters contributed reporting to this article.

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