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Don’t Discriminate Against Russia’s Rich, Top Senator Says

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Valentina Matviyenko **Valery Sharifulin / TASS**

Rich Russians should not be discriminated against, the country’s senate speaker has said days after Forbes published a ranking of the 100 wealthiest civil servants.

Regional deputies, governors and federal executive and legislative officials collectively earned 71 billion rubles ($1.1 billion) in 2018, Forbes Russia said earlier this month. The business magazine used the incomes that the officials and their families had declared in its calculations.

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“I think you’ll agree with me that society shouldn’t discriminate against well-off people,” Valentina Matviyenko, the speaker of Russia's upper house of parliament, told reporters Thursday.

Addressing the dominance of regional deputies in the Forbes ranking, Matviyenko maintained that "it's not a mass phenomenon, not a mass grab of legislative bodies by the rich."

"You're exaggerating the scale of the issue and thus fostering hatred toward rich people," she was quoted by the RBC news website as saying.

Matviyenko noted that the rich get elected to office because "voters see them as successful people," the state-run TASS news agency quoted her as saying.

"They hope that they will be able to make the country and the citizens rich."

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