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'Officers Are Resigning Every Day': Russia's Interior Ministry Faces Up to 40% Police Staff Shortages

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Valery Sharifullin / TASS

Russia's Interior Ministry is losing police officers on a daily basis, with staff shortages reaching as high as 40% in some units, Deputy Interior Minister Igor Zubov told lawmakers Tuesday.

Addressing the lower-house State Duma, Zubov said the prestige of police service had declined and that wages and social benefits no longer met expectations in market conditions.

"We are indeed losing personnel. Officers are resigning every day, and the inflow of new recruits does not compensate for the shortfall. Understaffing reaches 40% in some departments," he said.

Zubov said the government plans to raise police salaries, but acknowledged that the increases would be "not as significant as we would like."

Concerns over staffing shortages in the Interior Ministry have been raised repeatedly.

In March 2025, Interior Minister Vladimir Kolokoltsev said the ministry was short more than 170,000 personnel.

According to a ministry presentation at the time, shortages among certified officers stood at 23.9% in the criminal investigation department, 31.4% in patrol units, 24.7% in drug control divisions and 22.7% in preliminary investigation bodies.

Kolokoltsev also said that nearly half of experienced police officers left the service in 2024.

He cited dismissals of unit heads who failed to provide legally mandated leave to their subordinates, saying this "inevitably led to rising tensions within teams."

At an expanded Interior Ministry board meeting attended by President Vladimir Putin, Kolokoltsev estimated the overall staffing shortfall at 172,000 officers.

Putin instructed officials to make police pay "competitive," including through the provision of housing.

Despite the wave of resignations, Russia remains among the countries with the highest number of police officers per capita.

The country had 643 Interior Ministry officers per 100,000 residents in 2024, compared with 256 in the U.S., 120 in China, 128 in India and an average of about 335 across the European Union.

Under a presidential decree, the Interior Ministry's authorized staffing level was set to rise to 938,000 in 2025, up from 922,000 in 2023.

According to job listings aggregator GorodRabot, the average police salary in Russia in 2025 was just over 50,000 rubles ($655) per month.

In Moscow, police officers earn an average of 88,500 rubles ($1,160), while in St. Petersburg the figure is 72,700 rubles ($952).

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