Russian Federation
President Valdimir Putin
Biography: Vladimir Putin

- 1975: Earned Law Degree from Leningrad University
- 1974-1990: KGB Intelligence Officer for the USSR in East Germany, attained rank of Lieutenant Colonel
- 1991: Political advisor in Leningrad and Head of External Relations
- 1999-2000: Prime Minister of Russia
- 2000-2006: President of Russia
- 2008-2012: Russian Prime Minister & Chairman of United Russia Party
- 2012-Present: President of Russia
Video: “We restored our dignity as a great nation”
Politics

• Reduced ability of the people to directly control political appointments, reorganized Russia’s military, intelligence-security organization, and police operations.
• July 2000: gained the legal right to dismiss heads of federal subjects.
• 2004: direct election of governors by popular vote was ended.
• Exiled and imprisoned many government leaders who had served under Yeltsin. This forced others to join Putin.
• Codified land law and tax law and promulgated new codes on labor, administrative, criminal, commercial, and civil procedural law.
• 2016: Modernized its armed forces and expanded strategic nuclear and conventional forces.

• Use of military force in Crimea, Syria, and Chechnya.

• Suspected of cyber attacks on US and other nations.

The Economy

• 2000-2006
  • Economy made gains of 7% growth per year, making it the 7th largest economy
  • Middle class grew from 8 million to 55 million
  • Reduced taxes
  • Oil and gas energy in Russia fueled healthy economy for a decade

• 2012 - Present
  • Economic growth and reform stalled
  • High concentration of wealth directly in officials’ hands
  • Falling oil prices, international sanctions, and structural limitations pushed Russia into a deep recession in 2015, with GDP falling by close to 4%
  • Increased wealth disparity
2014: New laws further extended state control over mass-media

Authorities increasingly refuse to sanction public protests organized by government critics and political opposition and punished protesters participating in unsanctioned peaceful gatherings and single-person pickets.

2016: The lower chamber of parliament voted in a set of legislative amendments that severely undermine freedom of expression, freedom of conscience, and the right to privacy

- These laws were passed allegedly in the name of protecting the public from terrorism and extremists.

The “Yarovaya Law” recently passed and requires cellular and internet providers to store all communications data for six months and all metadata up to three years for potential access by security service.