



The Country of Return Information Project functions as a network of NGO's for the collection and transfer of specific information on reintegration possibilities for potential returnees and their counsellors. All questions you may have on reintegration possibilities and on which you don't find the answer in this country sheet, can be directed to the helpdesk "Country of Return Information".
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COUNTRY SHEET

RUSSIA

May 2007

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Further information can be obtained at return@vluchtelingenwerk.be.

The Country Sheet Russia is a product of the CRI project.

CRI-country sheets are prepared mainly on the basis of publicly available information, completed with data gathered by local partners in the specific countries, and will be updated periodically.

Our local partners in Russia are:

- Civic Assistance Committee for Forced Migrants and Refugees: a network organisation present in 46 regions, with its main office in Moscow. They act as an in-between for governmental bodies and migrants, supporting the latter with legal advice and humanitarian aid
- The House of Peace and Non-Violence: a St Petersburg based NGO active in the field of conflict management and human rights education, with a broad experience in assisting forced migrants

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1. Access to the territory (from country of asylum to return area)

1.1. Documentation

1.1.1. Required travel documents for returnees

The returnee needs a Russian travel passport, or – by absence of this – a temporary personal identification P-2 form issued at the Russian embassy.

In case of repatriation and in the absence of a valid passport, it is necessary to obtain a repatriation certificate at the Russian consulate or embassy. This document confirms the Russian citizenship of the returnee. In such a case, no other documents are required for entry into Russia.

1.1.2. Documents needed in the country of return

Documents confirming the identity of Russian citizens on its territory¹:

1. A Russian citizen's passport - since October 1, 1997 this is the main document that proves the identity of a Russian citizen on Russian territory.
2. An USSR citizen's passport of the type issued since 1974 functions on Russian territory as a form of personal identification. According to a Supreme Court appeals board decision from November 4, 2003, these passports have no effective expiration dates.
3. A sailor's passport is a document that proves the holder's identity both on Russian territory and abroad.
4. A birth certificate is a document that supports the identity of Russian citizens under the age of 14.
5. An identification of a member of the Russian armed forces is a document that supports the identity and legal status of a Russian serviceman.
6. A military service card is a document that supports the identities of both enlisted and drafted soldiers, sailors, sergeants and senior officers in active military service. It also applies to students of military academies and educational institutions for the duration of their enrolment.
7. A temporary personal identification of Russian citizenship, according to form No. 2-P - a document establishing a person's identity for a limited period of time.

¹ Russian Federation. Presidential decree No. 232, "On the basic document confirming the identity of a citizens of the Russian Federation in the Russian Federation" (Collection of legislation of the Russian Federation, 1997, No. 11, p. 1,301), from March 13, 1997, adopted by the Russian government. To be consulted via <http://www.consultant.ru/dbs/prof.phtml?BOCKQ> (In Russian language only). Last accessed May 2007.

1.1.3. How to obtain the required documents

Application for a Russian citizen's passport

According to a Russian presidential decree² - any person of 14 years of age or older who leaves the country must apply for a Russian citizen's passport, unless he is classified as either a serviceman or a sailor. At present, the responsibility for issuing and amending passports rests with Russia's Federal Migration Service (FMS) and its subdivisions.

New rules on the issuing of internal passports came in force only recently on February 17, 2007. They were implemented following decree No. 1105 "On confirming an Administrative regulation of the Federal Migration Service offering the government service of the issue and replacement of, and performing the government function of accounting for, the passport of a citizen of the Russian Federation, confirming their identity as that of a citizen of the Russian Federation on the territory of the Russian Federation." (Issued by the Russian Interior Ministry on December 28, 2006)³

All citizens of Russia, from the age of 14, must have a passport. The passports are subject to renewal on their 20th and 45th birthday, and each time the passport data changes.

In order to apply for a passport, one must present:

- a) Form No. 1-P for the issuing or renewing of a passport. The citizen who is applying for the passport must fill out the form in ink. If the citizen does not have the opportunity to do this personally, it will be completed by an employee of the FMS service.
- b) A birth certificate. If the citizen applies for his first passport, he must present his original birth certificate, or a certified duplicate issued by the civilian registry office (ZAGS) of his place of birth or of his place of residence.

In cases where it is impossible to present the original birth certificate (or a duplicate birth certificate), other documents that confirm the required information can be considered and accepted.

- c) Two passport photos. The photos must be identical, in black and white or in colour, 35 by 45 mm in size, and show a sharp, strictly frontal image of the face, without any head covering.

It is permissible for citizens whose religious beliefs do not permit the appearance in public without headdress to present photos with head coverings, provided they do not hide the oval of the face.

For citizens who permanently wear eyeglasses, it is required to be photographed with their glasses on. Tinted lenses are not permitted.

- d) Documents proving one's Russian citizenship - in case the citizenship of the applicant must be established.

Such documents may include a birth certificate, a marriage (or divorce) certificate, military service papers, a trade union or hunting card, a certificate confirming one's release from prison, a foreign passport, an employment book, a pension card, a driver's license or any other form of identification.

² Ibid.

³ Russian Ministry of the Interior. Decree No. 1105: "On confirming an Administrative regulation of the Federal Migration Service offering the government service of the issue and replacement, and performing the government function of accounting for, the passport of a citizen of the Russian Federation, confirming their identity as that of a citizen of the Russian Federation on the territory of the Russian Federation," issued on December 28, 2006, adopted by the city of Moscow.

To be consulted via <http://www.consultant.ru/dbs/prof.phtml?BOCKQ> (In Russian language only). Last accessed May 2007.

In extreme cases where the required documents are impossible to obtain, a person's citizenship may be confirmed by affidavit, or through any type of investigation.

In addition, a special court ruling may also assign the required legal weight for establishing Russian citizenship to ascertained facts like continuous residence on Russian territory since February 6, 1992, the absence of any other citizenship, as well as birth on Russian territory. In the instruction No. 587-8/general, issued on July 21, 2003, the Supreme Court's deputy chairman, V.M. Zhuykov, confirmed the requirement for courts to establish these facts.

e) Documents required for the issue of special stamps or other special identifications inside a passport. Such may include a military service card, the birth certificate of children under the age of 14, documents confirming registration in his place of residence in Russia.

f) Receipt for the payment of government taxes established by the Russian Tax Code.

Both citizens living outside Russia who want to return to their place of residence in Russia and citizens residing outside Russia must present the document that proves that they still have the Russian nationality.

As is evident from the above, a returnee's identity must be established before a passport is issued. There are cases where returnees failing to get their identity confirmed, were unable to enter Russia. Therefore it is important that the returnee collects documents that confirm his registration in his place of residence, as well as his Russian citizenship. In case the returnee is not registered anywhere, he should register in his place of temporary stay. If this is not possible, then he may apply for a passport at his actual residence. Although this is fairly difficult because it remains unclear which passport agency will be responsible for the issue of such a passport. In such cases appeals must be made to the Russian FMS management.

According to Article 13 of Decree No. 1105⁴, the issue and replacement of passports is performed by FMS subdivisions at the place of residence, place of temporary stay, or the location where the citizen's application is filed.

According to Article 16 of Decree No. 1105⁵, passports must be issued to citizens:

- within 10 days from when the FMS subdivision received all of the required documents, if the passport is being issued based on the place of residence;
- within two months from when the FMS subdivision received all of the required documents, if the passport is not being issued based on the place of residence, as well as in cases where the passport is stolen or lost.

It should be taken into account that these time guidelines are often not observed. The HRC Memorial "Migration Rights" Network confirms that it can take two to three weeks to receive a passport from the moment when all documents were filed. It is possible that the introduction of the new rules will change this state of affairs. They do not only impose strict timeframes on the issuing of passports, but also on the amount of time a person may be kept waiting in line. These time limits include: 30 minutes for submitting documents in cases where the person had already signed up, and 20 minutes (Article 17) for receiving the passport. It also limits the amount of time the document registration or passport issue process should take - 15 minutes for the submission of documents and 10 minutes (Article 18) for the passport issue.

In the Republic of Chechnya, these timeframes exceed the general average. According to numerous witness accounts, an applicant for a passport must first pay a particular sum of

⁴ *ibid.*

⁵ *ibid.*

money depending on the urgency of the request. The fact that a resident of Chechnya can only receive his passport within its territory, adds to the problem. Many citizens are afraid to go to Chechnya because of the high security risks. And most of them lack the money to pay for the trip and the additional fees that are being collected there. According to the new rules, such trip to Chechnya will no longer be necessary. However, how quickly these new rules can be applied, and what practices will actually be followed, may only be judged with time.

Securing a Russian travel passport

According to the Constitutional Court resolution No. 2-P, issued on January 15, 1998, a Russian citizen can apply for a travel passport at his place of registration, as well as in any other Russian FMS agency near his place of stay. In practice, this procedure may last for up to six months. However, this is a more secure method to obtain a passport than intermediation through private firms.

Recently the number of intermediary firms that assist in securing a passport have exploded in Russia. They charge fees that depend on the applicant's location in Russia and the urgency of his request. Their services cost up to EUR 1000. Some of these firms work in cooperation with the Russian FMS agencies. The documents they issue are actual passports, and the collected fees vary with the timeframes within which the order is executed. However there are also firms that issue counterfeit passports. As a rule, such firms frequently change their location and are impossible to track down in case of complaint or official sanctions.

Citizens who wish to use the services of intermediary firms must exercise extreme caution when making their selection⁶.

1.1.4. Prices of necessary documents

According to Article 333.33 of the Russian Tax Code⁷, a RUB 100 fee is collected for the issue of a Russian passport. The fee rises to RUB 150 in case of reissue of a lost or damaged document.

According to Article 333.33, a Russian citizen's passport for exit from or entry into Russia, issued outside the territory of Russia, is charged with a state fee of RUB 400 (RUB 1.000 for electronic types of identification). A passport establishing the identity of a Russian citizen under the age of 14 that is issued outside the territory of Russia is charged with a RUB 200 fee (RUB 500 for electronic types of identification).

The state tax is not the only fee paid by citizens securing a passport outside Russia; it represents only a small part of all the expenses involved in obtaining the document. The main cost is incurred with the consulate service payment, which varies from one Russian consulate to another, depending on which country it is located in. The consulates are relatively free to set their own prices. A Russian citizen pays USD 600 for a passport in a Russian consulate in the United States, which, according to various data, is four to six times the amount paid in Ukraine.

⁶ Interviews with visitors to the Civic Assistance Committee (CAC) reception office, and with staff of agencies that process the issue of passports, who preferred to remain anonymous. More information can be obtained at the local CAC offices (contact list annexed to the country sheet).

⁷ Russian Federation Tax Code. To be consulted via <http://www.gdezakon.ru/nalog/> Last accessed May 2007.

1.2. Travel to country of origin

1.2.1. By air

Russia has international airports in Moscow, St. Petersburg, Irkutsk, Khanty-Mansiysk, Novosibirsk, Sochi, Krasnodar, Saratov, Tyumen, Ufa, Samara, Rostov, Vologda, Vladivostok, Bratsk, Volgograd and Yekaterinburg.

Direct flights are possible between most European airports and Moscow. Prices for flights from Brussels to Moscow range from EUR 300 to EUR 800. The prices of onward connections vary greatly depending on the final destination. Tickets to Siberia cost more than EUR 1000. The admissible baggage weight is 20 to 30 kilograms, depending on the airline.

There are different combinations of direct and connected flights possible between St.-Petersburg and most European airports, e.g. Copenhagen, Amsterdam, Riga, etc. Some examples include airline companies like SAS, KLM, Lufthansa and Air France. Costs of the tickets can vary considerably, depending on the season and moment of booking. Depending on the airliner, it's permitted to transport personal goods of a weight of 20 to 30 kilograms.

1.2.2. By land

An extensive European railroad network makes it possible to travel to Russia by train. Train prices are almost the same as those on airlines. More information can be found at: <http://www.rzd.ru>. Railroad tickets can be purchased on-line in Russia on <http://www.dost.ru>.

1.3. Entry procedure

Regardless how one enters Russia, everyone must pass through passport control and customs at the border. Each person may also be forced to undergo additional checks from border control officials, as well as from interior ministry and Federal Security Service (FSB) agents. The experience of past returnee work shows that this most often happens to those native to the North Caucasus.

1.3.1. By air

A Russian citizen who returns to his homeland with a certificate issued at the Russian consulate usually arrives in Russia by plane. Under normal circumstances he passes through passport control without difficulties. However, in some cases unpleasant incidents can occur during checks of passports or replacement certificates. To prevent such incidents, it is recommended that relatives and representatives of social organizations be informed well in advance about the returnee's impending arrival.

Staff of the Civic Assistance Committee nongovernmental organization (+7 495 251 5319) in Moscow, as well as the “Migration Rights” network of the Memorial Human Rights Centre (HRC), which has legal counselling centres in 57 Russian regions (Moscow coordination centre phone number: +7 495 790 74 55), continuously provide this type of assistance, both to returnees and people being repatriated from Europe (see Annex 1).

Chances of detention and bribe extortion decrease considerably if the border patrol service, police and customs officials are informed ahead of time that the returnee is monitored by a nongovernmental organization. At the same time, it should be noted that if the returnee is suspected of having committed a crime or is wanted by the authorities, his legal arrest is possible, as are subsequent accompaniment in a police convoy and temporary detention up to a period of several days.

1.3.2. By land

Border extortion occurs more frequently when the returnee is returning by land than by air. This happens because these border controls do not occur at the final destination point but at the actual border itself, which gives more opportunity to officials to harass passengers during document and baggage checks, and carry out their extortion practices and collection of unjustified penalties. Most victims are people from the North Caucasus, and those born in the Caucasus and Central Asian republics.

1.3.3. By sea

It is possible to ship a container of goods to St. Petersburg via Hamburg. The cost for the 40 feet container is about EUR 2300. The journey will take 3-4 days, the time of passing through customs formalities another 2-3 days.⁸

1.4. Impacts of former acts and statuses upon entry

1.4.1. Impact of former refugee or subsidiary protection status

Russia has no rules against applying for asylum in another country. The return of people who received refuge during the Soviet communistic period is quite welcomed by the authorities. Until 2002, former citizens of the USSR who lost their citizenship as a result of emigration could easily replace it in accordance to Article 20 of the 1991 Russian federal law “On Citizenship”.⁹ Currently, according to the 2002 law “On citizenship of the RF”, citizenship is restored three years after the former USSR citizen returned to Russia and obtained a residence permit. Generally, in order to file a citizenship application, a person must have a Russian residence permit since five years.

⁸ Sea Station of the city of St. Petersburg. Contacts: manager of the Sea station, tel. +7 812 303 99 11 / +7 812 322 6052, Morkoy Slavi Square 1, St. Petersburg, Russia.

⁹ Russian Federation. Federal Law “On citizenship of the Russian Federation” of November 28, 1991. To be consulted via <http://www.consultant.ru/dbs/prof.phtml?BOCKQ> Last accessed May 2007.

Having refugee status in some other European country has no effect on the possibility of leaving or re-entering Russia. In addition, a refugee status - either current or past - is of no interest to Russian authorities. One may simply not bother with revealing this information to them. The same goes for the obtainment of second citizenship, since in accordance to Part 2 of Article 6 of the Russian federal law "On citizenship of the RF" a Russian citizen's adoption of some other citizenship does not entail the termination of Russian citizenship.

But a continued absence may have an effect on those who wish to return to the Republic of Chechnya. Federal armed forces, which could barely keep track of the population, have been replaced by local law enforcement authorities who know Chechnya's relatively small population and structure well. New arrivals come under immediate suspicion for several reasons. They can suspect a person who was absent for a long time and whose whereabouts and business are not disclosed, to be linked to the rebels. They can assume that a person who comes from a far away destination can be extorted a lot of money. Such an approach turns every returnee into a suspect and makes him a target for blackmail.

Several reports by human rights organization may be listed here to demonstrate how returnees or deported Chechens become victims of persecution, extortion and torture¹⁰.

It must be noted that it is impossible to exclude these same types of events from occurring in other North Caucasus republics.

1.4.2. Impact of former unsuccessful asylum claims

Attempts to be recognised as a refugee should not affect the fate of a returnee. Exceptions arise in cases where the person led an active political life outside Russia aimed at criticizing the current political situation and the country's leadership: appearances in the mass media, participation in conferences, hearings in the Europe Court of Human Rights, and so on. The persecution of those who appeal to the European Court is detailed in reports of the Memorial human rights centre and other human rights organizations.¹¹

1.4.3. Impact of former illegal exit from country of origin

Article 27 of the Russian Constitution states that a Russian citizen has the right to unhindered re-entry into the country. If his passport does not carry a stamp indicating an earlier exit from Russia, then he may be subjected to longer checks than usual. At the same time, the presence of valid Russian citizenship is sufficient for the unhindered entry into the country.

1.4.4. Impact of crime committed outside the country of origin

According to part 1 of Article 50 of the Russian Constitution, no one may be prosecuted for the same criminal offence twice. However, as some authors note, this phrase does not exclude some other, non-criminal, forms of prosecution: civilian, administrative, tax,

¹⁰ HRC Memorial. Svetlana Gannushkina, ANNUAL REPORT "On the Situation of Residents of Chechnya in the Russian Federation July 2005 - July 2006" » M. « Valenta », 2006 / www.memo.ru

¹¹ Obshestvenny Verdict Foundation, "The persecution of those who appeal to the European Court", 21.11.2006 / <http://www.publicverdict.org/ru/articles/library/76211106.html> Last accessed May 2007.

disciplinary and so on.¹² The application of the law in Russia is such that double jeopardy via a new, non-criminal case is quite possible. As article 50 uses the term CRIME rather than INFRACTION, there remains a possibility that a person may be punished twice for the same act, first under criminal and then under administrative or civil law. Example: A refugee loses his status for any crime for which he has already been convicted in any other country.

1.5. Customs regulations

Entry into Russia is conducted through special entrance points established for railroads, automobiles, sea and river ports, airports and airfields that are open to international flights. This could also extend to other specially equipped places where border controls and other forms of control - e.g. the clearance of people, means of transportation, cargo, goods and animals - can be conducted.

July 31, 2005 saw the coming into force of a July 18, 2005 amendment (law No. 90-F3) to law No. 173-F3 from December 10, 2003 "On currency regulation and currency control" that changed the way private individuals could carry Russian and foreign currencies, as well as securities, across the border.

The amendment requires a written declaration of the foreign currency brought into Russia, as well as of the Russian currency, traveller's checks, and local and foreign financial holdings if their total sum exceeds USD 10 000. At the same time, it establishes no limits on the amount of money that may be brought in. The declaration is explained by the need to keep a statistical account of the movement of large sums of cash and securities.

Early 2007, (government resolutions No. 29 issued January 21, 2006, and No. 567 issued September 16, 2006) a change was made to the "Condition for using unified customs tariffs and taxes on goods being moved across the border of the RF by private individuals for personal use" (government resolution No. 718 from November 29, 2003).

Russia's federal customs service explains the new customs control rules for private individuals going in and out of the country by air on its official web site.¹³

Upon entry into Russia

- a) One can pass through the "green corridor" without filling out a customs declaration form if:
- The person entering the country has no additional (unaccompanied) luggage, while the accompanied luggage has no objects and goods banned or limited from entry into Russia;
 - The cost of the goods does not exceed the equivalent of RUB 65 000, while the total luggage weight does not exceed 35 kilograms, or no more than RUB 650 000 for maximum 200 kilograms. Goods exceeding the stated norm are subjected to flat customs duties and taxes of 30 % of the customs cost, but no less than EUR 4 per 1 kilogram;

¹² Rossyskaya Gazeta. PMUI, March 12, 2001, N° 49 / www.pmui.ru/stat-1.shtml , last accessed May 2007

¹³ Federal Custom Service, http://www.customs.ru/ru/fl_info/, last accessed on March 30, 2007
Contact: e-mail of the Department: umts_kudryavtsev@mail.customs.ru

- The total sum of the financial resources (foreign currency and roubles, foreign and local securities, as well as traveller’s checks) does not exceed EUR 10 000;
 - The amount (per person) of sturgeon caviar (in commercial packaging) does not exceed 250 grams. Entry of larger amounts requires a license from the Economic Development and Trade Ministry;
 - The arriving person is not carrying sturgeon or any kind of by-product. Import is allowed with a license from the Economic Development and Trade Ministry.
 - The amount of alcohol (per person who is 21 and older) does not exceed 2 litres and tobacco products (per person who is 18 and older) do not exceed 50 cigars, 100 cigarillos, 200 cigarettes and 0.25 kilograms of tobacco. The import of only one type of good is also allowed: 100 cigars, 200 cigarillos, 400 cigarettes or 0.5 kilograms of tobacco;
 - The arriving person is not carrying arms and munitions (unless allowed for entry with an Interior Ministry permit);
 - The arriving person carries no radio-electronic equipment (radiotelephones, radio stations, satellite communication devices and so on), except those of a temporary nature. These devices can be imported with a permit of the state communication oversight body;
- b) If the arriving person carries foreign currency, cash valuables or other goods that require a mandatory written declaration, then he must fill out two copies of the customs declaration form and enter through the “red corridor”.

In case a person disagrees with a decision made by the customs official regarding the cost of a good or another matter, the person may appeal the decision in accordance with chapter 4 of the Russian Customs Code. During the appeal hearing process, either the responsible customs official or the customs agency reserves the right to order a price evaluation of the good. The person bringing in the good covers the cost of the evaluation.

It is recommended that the arrivals learn more about the existing customs regulations at the information desks set up before entry through customs control.

Preliminary consultations may be held with the customs services you intend to use for crossing the border.

CUSTOM SERVICES

Sheremetyevo Airport Moscow	Domodedovo Airport Moscow	Vnukovo Airport Moscow	Pulkovo II Airport ¹⁴ St. Petersburg
+7 495 578-21-20 +7 495 578-14-30	+7 495 787-29-80	+7 495 736-90-62	+7 812 326 22 97

According to regulation 3, the intended use of goods is determined by the Russian customs service from the private individual’s declaration on goods being carried over Russia’s customs border, along with the nature of those goods and their number, as well as the frequency of their use. For this reason, if a good is imported in an amount that slightly exceeds the usual needs, proof must be submitted that it is not being brought in for commercial purposes.

The same regulation determines the rules for bringing automobiles into Russia.

¹⁴ Saint Petersburg Pulkovo Airport. More info on <http://www.pulkovo.ru/>

Unified customs and tax duties are applied on persons bringing automobiles into the customs territory of Russia.

- a) On automobiles that were not produced in Russia and that are not older than three years since the date of issue:
- ↪ If the price does not exceed RUB 325 000, 48 % of the customs value, but no less than EUR 2,5/cm³ of the engine's capacity, is applied;
 - ↪ If the price ranges between RUB 325 000 and RUB 650 000, 48 % of the customs value, but no less than EUR 3,5/cm³ of the engine's capacity, is applied;
 - ↪ If the price ranges between RUB 650 000 and RUB 1.625 million, 48 % of the customs value, but no less than EUR 5,5/cm³ of the engine's capacity, is applied;
 - ↪ If the price ranges between RUB 1.625 million and RUB 3.25 million, 48 % of the customs value, but no less than EUR 7,5/cm³ of the engine's capacity, is applied;
 - ↪ If the price ranges between RUB 3.25 million and RUB 6.5 million, 48 % of the customs value, but no less than EUR 15/cm³ of the engine's capacity, is applied;
 - ↪ if the price is more than RUB 6.5 million, 48 % of the customs value, but no less than EUR 20/cm³ of the engine's capacity, is applied;
- b) On automobiles aged between three and seven years from the date of issue, regardless of where they were produced:
- ↪ if engine capacity is no more than 1000 cm³, EUR 0.85/cm³ of the engine's capacity is applied;
 - ↪ if the engine capacity ranges between 1000-1500 cm³, EUR 1/cm³ of the engine's capacity is applied;
 - ↪ if the engine capacity ranges between 1500-1800 cm³, EUR 1,5/cm³ of the engine's capacity is applied;
 - ↪ if the engine capacity ranges between 1800-2300 cm³, EUR 1,75/cm³ of the engine's capacity is applied;
 - ↪ if the engine capacity ranges between 2300-3000 cm³, EUR 2/cm³ of the engine's capacity is applied;
 - ↪ if the engine capacity is more than 3000 cm³, EUR 2,25/cm³ of the engine's capacity is applied;
- c) On automobiles older than seven years since the date of issue, regardless of where they were produced:
- ↪ if the engine capacity is no more than 2500 cm³, EUR 2/cm³ of the engine's capacity is applied;
 - ↪ if the engine capacity is more than 2500 cm³, EUR 3/cm³ of the engine's capacity is applied.

To determine a unified customs duty and tax on automobiles maximum three years older than the date of issue, their price is understood to be the value for which they were sold or offered for retail sale in competitive conditions. The given price for an automobile of a particular make and year is based on figures provided by the automobile producers and, if those are lacking, on values provided by international organizations involved in car sales and other independent price information sources that are available to the Russian customs authority.

Automobiles may be brought into the customs territory of Russia without payment of customs duties, if this is foreseen by Russian international agreements, by private individuals who:

- a) permanently reside in Russia - in case they bring in an automobile made on the territory of the former USSR, or which was produced for free use on its territory and belonged to the indicated individual or his family prior to December 31, 1991;
- b) are recognized in the required order as refugees or forced migrants, and also people who moved to Russia from other countries to become permanent residents - in case they are bringing in an automobile produced in Russia or another country that is a member of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), and which was obtained by the given person prior to entry into Russia.

The given persons may use customs exemptions for a period of up to three years from the day of receiving the status of refugee or forced migrant in Russia, under condition that this status is retained at the moment of the vehicle's customs declaration.

Unfortunately, practice shows that abuse, extortion and poor knowledge of regulations changes by customs officials are frequent. This is one of the main complaints from both voluntary returnees and forced migrants. Therefore, in order to avoid border problems, it is recommended that prior to entry into Russia one acquires a copy of the regulations for customs declarations on goods intended for entry into Russia.

1.6. Access to return area

1.6.1. Limitations of internal travel

On July 5, 2001 government resolution No. 508 imposed restrictions on access and entry in certain Russian regions. According to this resolution, administrative and territorial sites are considered closed to the public if they house facilities for: the development, manufacture, storage and utilization of weapons of mass destruction; the processing of radioactive and other hazardous materials; military and other facilities or sites that require special security protection and other regiments for securing state secrets, including their citizens' special livelihood and survival conditions.

In order to travel to the border zones a permit is compulsory.

Entrance to the territory of Sosnoviy Bor (in the Leningrad region) is limited, as are some border zones on Karelian Isthmus (the border with Finland).¹⁵

The Federal Border Department, which is part of the Federal Security Service (FSS), has established a new border zone in accordance with the Decree of FSS N 229.

¹⁵ Information has been received by the phone information service of the Oktyabrskaya railway in St. Petersburg, March 2007. Contact: State Unitary Enterprise " Oktyabrskaya Railway " Ministry of Railways. Ostrovsky Square, 2, St. Petersburg 191011, Russia. Tel.: +7 812 168-6070/ 168-6934.

List of closed administrative-territorial sites and settlements located on their territories¹⁶

Subject of Federation	Name of territory	Administrative centre	Name of the place
Republic of Bashkortostan	Mezhgorye	city of Mezhgorye	city of Mezhgorye
Altai Region	Sibirsky	settlement of Sibirsky	village of Sibirsky
Krasnoyarsky Region	Zheleznogorsk	city of Zheleznogorsk	city of Zheleznogorsk; Dodonovo, Novy, Podgorny, Put, Tartat settlements; village of Shivera
	Zelenogorsk	city of Zelenogorsk	city of Zelenogorsk
	Kedrovoi	settlement of Kedrovoi	settlement of Kedrovoi
	Solnechny	settlement of Solnechny	settlement of Solnechny
Primorsky Region	Bolshoi Kamen	city of Bolshoi Kamen	city of Bolshoi Kamen; Petrovka and Sukhodol settlements
	Fokino	city of Fokino	city of Fokino; Dunai, Putyatin settlements
Amur Region	Ulegorsk	settlement of Ulegorsk	settlement of Ulegorsk
Arkhangelskaya oblast	city of Mirny	city of Mirny	city of Mirny
Astrakhanskaya oblast	Znamensk	city of Znamensk	city of Znamensk
Vladimir Region	Raduzhny	city of Raduzhny	city of Raduzhny
Kamchatka Region	Vilyuchinsk	city of Vilyuchinsk	city of Vilyuchinsk
Kirov Region	Pervomaysky	settlement of Pervomaysky	settlement of Pervomaysky
Moscow Region	Krasnoznamensk	city of Krasnoznamensk	city of Krasnoznamensk
	Voskhod	settlement of Voskhod	settlement of Voskhod
	Molodyozhny	settlement of Molodyozhny	settlement of Molodyozhny
Murmansk Region	Skalisty	city of Gadzhiyevo	city of Gadzhiyevo; Kuvshinskaya Salma, Olenya Guba, Saida-Guba settlements
	Zaozersk	city of Zaozersk	city of Zaozersk

¹⁶ Budgetnaya Sistema of the Russian Federation. List of closed administrative-territorial sites and settlements, to be consulted on www.budgetrf.ru/Publications/2003/Pursuance/Federal/Npd/Budgetlaws/1827p11122003/1827p11122003020.htm Last accessed May 2007.

Subject of Federation	Name of territory	Administrative centre	Name of the place
	Ostrovnoy	city of Ostrovnoy	city of Ostrovnoy
	Polyarni	city of Polyarny	city of Polyarny; Goryachiye Ruchyi and Retinskoye settlements, village of Belokamenka
	Severomorsk	city of Severomorsk	city of Severomorsk Roslyakovo, Safonovo, Severomorsk-3 settlements
	Shchukozero Snezhnogorsk	city of Snezhnogorsk	city of Snezhnogorsk
	Vidyayevo	settlement of Vidyayevo	settlement of Vidyayevo
Nizhny Novgorod Region	Sarov	city of Sarov	city of Sarov
Orenburg Region	Komarovsky	settlement of Komarovsky	settlement of Komarovsky
Penza Region	Zarechny	city of Zarechny	city of Zarechny
Perm region	Zvyozdny	settlement of Zvyozdny	settlement of Zvyozdny
Saratov Region	Shikhany	city of Shikhany	city of Shikhany
	Svetly	settlement of Svetly	settlement of Svetly
Sverdlovsk Region	Lesnoy	city of Lesnoy	city of Lesnoy
	Novouralsk	city of Novouralsk	city of Novouralsk; settlement of Murzinka, selo Naraskovo; Palniki, Pochinok, and Elani villages
	Svobodny	settlement of Svobodny	settlement of Svobodny
	Uralsky	settlement of Uralsky	settlement of Uralsky
	Ozerny	settlement of Ozerny	settlement of Ozerny
	Solnechny	settlement of Solnechny	settlement of Solnechny
Tomsk Tver Region	Seversk	city of Seversk	city of Seversk; Samus and Orlovka settlement; Kizjirovo, Chernilshikovo and Semiozerki villages
Chelyabinsk Region	Ozersk	city of Ozersk	city of Ozersk; Novogorny, Tatysh, Metlino and Bizjelyak, Selezni and Novoya Techa village
	Snezjinsk	city of Snezhjinsk	city of Snezhjinsk; Blizjny Beregoyoy settlement, Kluchi village
	Trekhgorny	city of Trekhgorny	city of Trekhgorny

Subject of Federation	Name of territory	Administrative centre	Name of the place
	Lokomotivny	settlement of Lokomotivny	settlement of Lokomotivny
Chita Region	Gorny	settlement of Gorny	settlement of Gorny

1.6.1.1. Administrative restrictions

In order to travel freely on the territory of Russia one needs to have a Russian citizen's passport with the stamp of permanent registration as well as the travel documents (tickets from the place of permanent registration to the place of destination).

A person who wants to travel by train or by air, needs to show his passport to the cashier who will write his name and the passport number on the ticket. This will permit the traveller to enter on board the train or plane. Big luggage provokes the suspicion of the police and can lead to luggage and documents checks.

The traveller is not required to register at his destination if his stay is limited to a period of 90 days. However, he needs to keep his travel ticket and show it to the police in case of control. If he stays longer than 90 days, the traveller has to appeal for the provisional registration.

1.6.1.2. Practical obstacles

Natives and residents of the North Caucasus and Central Asia who want to settle in Russia may have to deal with a local xenophobic administration or population, making it difficult and in some cases impossible for them to register with their relative or friends, to rent housing or to obtain registration as local residents.

1.6.2. Territories impossible or dangerous to approach

The Republic of Chechnya and most other North Caucasus republics¹⁷.

1.6.3. Means of internal travel

Railroads and air transport are generally the best option. However some regions can only be accessed by car. This is the case for the North Caucasus, regions of the Far North, and the abandoned agricultural settlements of central Russia.

Travelling is quite expensive.

Prices for airline tickets from Moscow to: St. Petersburg RUB 6000; Vladikavkaz RUB 7000; Irkutsk RUB 13 000; Vladivostok RUB 24 000.

¹⁷ E-Mine. Electronic Mine information Network. "Russian Federation (Chechnya)"/ <http://www.mineaction.org/country.asp?c=20> Last accessed March 2007.

Railway tickets from Moscow to: St. Petersburg RUB 1300-2200; Irkutsk RUB 7500-9500; Vladikavkaz RUB 8200-12 100; Vladivostok RUB 30 000 (March 2007). An electronic service is available for all flights and railroads.¹⁸

The Leningrad region offers different means of travel. You may travel by bus or take local trains. Riding the local train within one zone costs RUB 9 (EUR 0,26). One single zone extends to 5-10 km.

The fare for the bus varies. For example, a one-way ticket in the shuttle from Gatchina (a town in the Leningrad region, 40 km from St. Petersburg) to St. Petersburg costs RUB 40 (EUR 1,18).

¹⁸ For more practical information: www.spravka.net

2. Physical security (in return area)

2.1. On-going armed conflict

Two armed conflicts occurred on the territory of Russia since the collapse of the USSR.

October 1992 saw a brief armed flare-up in the ongoing Ingush-Ossetian interethnic conflict. Military activity lasted only for a few days in the Prigorodny region of the North Ossetia-Alania Republic (RNO-A) but to this day the conflict's ramifications have not been fully resolved. Although authorities are committed to provide security and to return housing to the Ingush who were forced to flee their homes, a genuine threat remains for those who return to the Prigorodny region of RNO-A and the problem districts Oktyabrskoye, Ir and Yuzhnoye.

Since 1994 the Republic of Chechnya has endured several military waves. Despite the partial restoration of living conditions and the authorities' repeated claims of the situation's full stabilization, it is still premature to speak of even a basic level of security returning to Chechnya.¹⁹ In November 2006, the HRC Memorial and the International Federation of Human Rights Leagues (FIDH) issued a joint report entitled "Torture in Chechnya: The Stabilization of a Nightmare".²⁰ This report details the practice of fabricated criminal cases, torture as a deeply rooted method of obtaining testimony and self-incriminating confessions, abductions, and - most importantly - the authorities' refusal to investigate crimes committed by their representatives.

2.2. Regions with high security risk

High levels of extremist sentiments and related crimes are in evidence across Russia, a fact admitted at the highest levels of federal government. In an interview²¹ with the Union State magazine, Russian Interior Minister Rashid Nurgaliyev said: "A justified concern is being raised in all levels of society by the growth of extremism based on national, religious and racial grounds. Unfortunately, a part of the country's youth has become infected by extremist elements. There is concern about the increase of the number of cases of physical violence committed by members of extremist organizations against people who come from other countries".

¹⁹ ECRE. "Guidelines on the Treatment of Chechen Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), Asylum Seekers & Refugees in Europe", Revised March 2007 / http://www.ecre.org/files/chechen_guidelines.pdf . Last accessed May 2007.

²⁰ HRC Memorial and International Federation of Human Rights Leagues (FIDH). Human Rights in Russia. "Torture in Chechnya: The Stabilization of a Nightmare", November 2006 / www.hro.org/war/2006/11/22-1.php Last accessed May 2007.

²¹ Interview with the Russian Minister of the Interior R.G. Nurgaliyev, published in "Union State" magazine, March 1, 2001.

The number of regions engulfed by interethnic tensions continues to grow. The main ones being the North Caucasus, Krasnodar Region, St. Petersburg, the city of Moscow and the Moscow Region, and Voronezh. Up-to-date systematic and analytical information about the ongoing events and trends in this area may be found with the SOVA Centre for Information and Analysis.²²

Below we present SOVA data on the recent growth of ethnic fueled extremist sentiments among the Russian population:

Cumulative statistics on racial and nationalistic attacks in 2004-2006 (split into seasons of the year)

	2004			2005			2006		
	Killed	Beaten and wounded	Total victims	Killed	Beaten and wounded	Total victims	Killed	Beaten and wounded	Total victims
Winter	9	22	31	7	72	79	8	102	110
Spring	10	77	87	5	119	124	14	96	110
Summer	16	20	36	7	69	76	17	163	180
Fall	9	79	88	21	107	128	9	94	103
Total	47	212	259	42	406	448	48	455	503

In the main criminal hotspots

	2004			2005			2006		
	Killed	Beaten and wounded	Total victims	Killed	Beaten and wounded	Total victims	Killed	Beaten and wounded	Total victims
Moscow and its region	15	59	73	12	177	188	30	181	211
St. Petersburg	9	32	41	4	45	49	5	42	47
Vladivostok	5	9	14	0	3	3	0	15	15
Volgograd	0	2	2	0	1	1	2	5	7
Voronezh	1	2	3	1	21	22	1	6	7
Irkutsk Region	3	0	3	2	5	7	0	8	8
Kaluga	0	0	0	0	11	11	1	2	3
Kostroma	0	5	5	0	0	0	0	10	10
Krasnodar Region	2	32	34	1	3	4	0	3	3

²² SOVA Information and Analytical Centre. To be consulted at <http://www.sova-center.ru> . Last accessed May 2007.

Nizhny Novgorod	1	5	6	4	12	16	0	25	25
Novosibirsk	2	12	14	1	9	10	0	9	9

In addition, 13 killings of homeless people were recorded in 2004 for which authorities suspect ideological (nationalistic) motives; 5 such killing and 4 beatings were recorded in 2005; and on May 27-28, 2006, skinheads and other homophobes beat up more than 50 gays and lesbians during and after a peaceful parade. Yet over the same three-year span, only 25 convictions were handed down in which xenophobic motives were taken into consideration.

Besides the rise of mass xenophobia and the unpunished actions of extremist organizations, October 2006 also became infamous for the launch of the state's anti-Georgian campaign, whose origins were based in geopolitics. This campaign was condemned by the Presidential council on developing institutes of civil society and human rights, which issued a brief statement on this occasion.²³ It states: "Mass checks of people's compliance with the Russian residence rules and of the legitimacy of their employment and businesses are being conducted exclusively against Georgian citizens and ethnic Georgians. This is persecution based on national identity, which is inadmissible. In many cases, such checks are being carried out with serious violations of the law. Administrative and legal measures of prosecution are being applied groundlessly: businesses are being shut down if they employ an ethnic Georgian, visas legally issued to Georgians are being revoked, as are their registrations based on place of stay or residence. People are being illegally detained and expelled from Russia. In these cases the courts often carry out verdicts in absentia, without listening to the detained, and without taking circumstances such as the presence of family and children with Russian citizenship, and the absence of any violations on the part of the person facing expulsion, into account. The presidential council of Russia on developing institutes of civil society and human rights believes that such selective cases of persecution are incompatible with the constitutional principles of a lawful government, but are an inadmissible form of discrimination, and may not be viewed as a legal means of fighting illegal immigration."

Several people died under the conditions in which they were held in detention prior to being expelled. In addition to the types of anti-Georgian persecution listed above, 2006 saw other forms of human degradation like the checking of higher learning facilities for the enrolment of Georgians. Even children in kindergartens and grade schools were questioned for the presence of ethnic Georgians in their ranks. There were also cases of repatriations of ethnic-Georgian Russian citizens who did not have their passports with them when they were stopped on the streets for checks.

The anti-Georgian campaign has not been concluded yet: according to information the Civic Assistance Committee received from lower-ranking officers, police are still required to check Georgians for their registration and potential participation in criminal activity²⁴.

Thus, xenophobic sentiments are on the rise, while governmental measures to protect ethnic and other minorities remain weak^{25 26 27}.

²³ Statement of Ella Pamfilova, a member of the Presidential Council on developing institutes of civil society and human rights, 20.05.2007.

²⁴ Memorial HRC and Civic Assistance Committee, "Anti-Georgian Campaign Launched on the Territory of Russia", November 2006 / www.ihf-hr.org/documents/doc_summary.php?sec_id=58&d_id=4348 Last Accessed May 2007.

Please note: Civic Assistance Committee monitors this situation. For up-to-date information on the anti-Georgian campaign please contact Civic Assistance Committee (contact list in annex).

2.3.Crime

In early March, 2007, Russia's Interior Ministry published its brief analysis of the state of criminal activity for 2006²⁸. It shows that the number of criminal cases launched last year - 3.263 million - is 11.5 % higher than in 2005. There were 3.856 million registered crimes, which is 8.5 % higher than in 2005. At the same time, the percentage of serious crimes, as a percentage of all those committed, dropped from 30.3 % in 2005 to 27.9 % in 2006. Thus, the number of total serious crimes was practically unchanged²⁹.

More than half of all registered crimes (54.3 %) consisted of various forms of stealing: 1.677 millions thefts, 357 300 burglaries and 59 800 robberies. Slightly over 1/3 of the thefts, 4.2 % of the burglaries and 6.8 % of the robberies involved illegal trespassing into homes, buildings or storage facilities³⁰.

The use of weapons was registered in 1.873 million crimes reports, which is 13.2 % less than in 2005.

Economic crimes grew by 11.8 % to halt at 489 600. The tax division of the Interior Ministry recorded 25 600 crimes, which represents 5.2 % of all types of economic crimes.

Some 2.032 million crimes remained unsolved, which is 22.5 % higher than the number in 2005. Serious and especially serious crimes represent 27.6 % of that figure. Some 4866 murders and attempted murders, 12 999 cases of intentional serious bodily harm, 1.182 million thefts, 251 800 burglaries and 32 200 robberies remained unsolved.

There were 21 200 drug-related crimes, which is 21.0 % higher than the figure in 2005.

In 2006 the crime rate grew in 69 Russian regions and fell in 20.

2.3.1.Regions with extremely high level of crime

The Chechen Republic and in some degree other regions of the Northern Caucasus know a high level of crime.

It's rather difficult to get the statistics of the criminal situation in St. Petersburg. According to the website www.stockmap.ru/news 103 000 crimes have been registered in St. Petersburg and Leningrad region during the first 9 months of the year 2006.

²⁵ International Federation of Human Rights Leagues (FIDH) and Civic Assistance Committee. "Migrations en Russie. Des populations fragilisées, premières victimes des crises politiques internes et externes"; April 2007 / <http://www.fidh.org/IMG/pdf/Migranrussie472fr2007.pdf> Last accessed May 2007

²⁶ Amnesty International. Country Reports: "Russian Federation - Violent Racism Out of Control", 4 May 2006 / <http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGEUR460222006?open&of=ENG-RUS> Last accessed May 2007

²⁷ Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, "Russia. Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 2006", March 6, 2007 / <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2006/78835.htm> Last accessed March 2007

²⁸ Ministry of the Interior of the Russian Federation. Consult the official Internet site <http://www.mvdinform.ru/>

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

2.3.2. Risk of becoming a victim of human trafficking

A report by Yelena Tyuryukanova, published jointly with the Institute of City Economy Foundation, under the title “2006 - Overview of the current situation and countermeasures for fighting human trafficking in the Russian Federation”³¹ was compelled to conclude that Russia has become ensnared in the international human trafficking network. Russia is a country from which people are smuggled, mostly into European countries and the United States, and at the same time a country into which they are being brought. All of the usual categories of human trafficking are being conducted - whether it is smuggling people, especially children, for sexual exploitation; the trade of people as slave labour; the trade of people and especially children and those with disabilities for begging; marriages for exploitation or forced surrogate childbearing; and the use of soldiers and prisoners as forced labour. As a rule, mostly people from the poorest layers of society, illegal people seeking work, and marginalized groups of society fall victim to this trade.

Studying the problem of organized crime in Russia, A.N. Sukharenko (Law Institute of the Far Eastern State University) 2006)³², describes the situation surrounding human trafficking in Russia as thus:

“The problem of human trafficking in Russia, especially of women and children, has sharply increased in recent years. According to the UN Centre for International Crime Prevention, Russia holds a leading place among countries supplying ‘live goods’ to the world’s sex industry. Unfortunately, the exact number of people delivered from Russia and being held abroad is unknown. However in 2001, Russia’s Interior Ministry reported that 102 women who had been sold for sexual exploitation abroad approached Russian consulates for help. Seventy of those cases occurred in Germany.

Over the past seven years, several dozen criminal organizations have been discovered in Russia that recruit and ship women abroad for subsequent sexual exploitation. For the most part, women and girls are being sent out to work as prostitutes in the countries of Eastern and Western Europe, the Middle East and South-eastern Asia. According to K. Rema, an expert with the UN Centre for International Crime Prevention, a Russian woman costs anywhere from EUR 5000 in Europe, depending on the quality of the good and the market demands. The export of women for sexual exploitation is propelled by economic crisis (joblessness, absence of opportunity to find employment that can provide a decent standard of living) and the absence of normal employment practices abroad (ease of obtaining the required licenses, although only a small number of firms have serious experience in this field).

Many Russian regions have been drawn into the international human trafficking network. The main route by which Russia delivers its ‘live goods,’ according to International Organization for Migration exporters, is through the Baltic states (to European countries and the United States, from north-western regions and the Kaliningrad district), Georgia (from across the entire country to Turkey, the United Arab Emirates and Greece), Siberia (to China), and the Primorye region (to China and the Republic of Korea). Within the system of international human trade, Russia is also a destination point for women from the CIS states (Ukraine, Moldova, Belarus and others). In 2002 alone, the Angel Coalition for combating and preventing human trafficking registered 359 cases of human

³¹ Tyuryukanova, Yelena and the Institute for Urban Economics for the UN/IOM Working Group on trafficking in human beings, “Human trafficking in the Russian Federation. Inventory and analysis of the current situation and responses”, Moscow 2006 / http://www.cflr.org/Unicef_EnglishBook.pdf Last accessed March 2007.

³² Sukharenko A.N., “Transnational aspects of Russian organized crime activity: Organized crime, terrorism, corruption, their manifestations and the fight against them”. - in “*Russian Criminological Association*”, 2005. pp. 35-49.

trafficking on the territory of Russia. Considering the evasiveness of the problem, the Angel Coalition³³ believes that this is only one-tenth of the number of cases actually taking place.”

At the same time it should be noted that with proper precautions one could minimize the risk of becoming a victim of human trafficking in most Russian regions. But one should treat offers from various firms offering employment outside Russia with extreme caution.

The situation is different in the Republic of Chechnya, where currently the problem of abductions - although their numbers continue to fall - remains a serious one (see part 3.1 above).

The Memorial human rights centre whose activities also monitor 30 % of the territory of Chechnya, reports³⁴ the following figures for the number of recorded abductions: 544 people in 2002, 498 people in 2003, 450 people in 2004, 323 people in 2005, 186 people in 2006. Thirteen abductions were recorded in the first two months of 2007. However it should be noted that Memorial believes that the recent drop in the number of reported abductions does not entirely reflect the actual state of affair. Lately Chechen residents choose not to turn to either the security authorities or human rights organization for help, but prefer to resolve the problem of their relatives' abductions through personal agreements and ransom payments instead.

In addition, Memorial and CAC declare that there is a fairly high risk for young women of becoming victims of kidnapping. Sometimes this is done under the guise of traditional “wife abductions,” an old practice among mountainous people of taking young women away for marriage. In modern times, such “abductions” often occur with the consent of the woman herself. However in today’s Chechnya, cases have been registered of actual kidnappings taking place. The abductors, when stopped by the locals, respond that they are conducting the traditional “wife abductions”. The woman returns after some time, and as a rule does not reveal what happened to her in her absence since tradition puts the blame for any assault against her on the woman herself. Staff from human rights organizations know of numerous such incidents, which are impossible to fully reveal in public.

This practice also takes place in other North Caucasus republics.

2.3.3. Risk of becoming a victim of forced prostitution

In April 2006, the International Organization for Migration presented a report on human trafficking in Russia. It concluded that Russian Criminal Code Articles 127.1 and 127.2, introduced in 2003 to fight human trafficking and slave labour, are not effective. Over two years, only 26 cases were instituted against 12 people in accordance with these articles, even though 30 000 to 60 000 women are being taken out of Russia every year.³⁵

At the same time, Russia is both a donor country and a recipient country of “live goods”. For the most part, women are brought out of Russia to engage in prostitution. Experts estimate a number between 30 000 and 60 000 annually. There are four main export routes: the Baltic route to Germany, with subsequent deliveries to other European countries and the United States; the Caucasus route which goes through Georgia and Turkey to Greece and Italy; the Middle Eastern route via Egypt to Israel; and the Chinese route from Siberia and the Primorye region to northern China.

³³ Angel Coalition, The Anti-trafficking Coalition of Russia and CIS www.angelcoalition.org/epjs/e_index.html Last accessed March 2007.

³⁴ See www.memo.ru:events in the Caucasus. The site is constantly updated. Last accessed on March 15, 2007.

³⁵ Novye Izvestia newspaper, April 27, 2006.

Within Russia itself, human trafficking primarily concerns women who are used for sexual exploitation. Newcomers are in the highest risk category. A poll of illegal migrants shows that 30 % of work migrants came across forced sex labour. One study ³⁶ shows that 80 % of Moscow's approximately 100 000 prostitutes come from elsewhere.

According Yelena Mizulina³⁷, deputy head of the State Duma's legal department, most of the cases instituted under Articles 127.1 and 127.2 fall apart in court due to the victims' fear for their own and their families' safety.

More information can be obtained at the Institute of Non-discriminative gender interrelations/Crises centre for women (St. Petersburg) and Coalition "Angel"³⁸

2.3.4 Effectiveness of protection

2.3.4.1. Police forces

In 2006, following the Interior Ministry's first-ever registration of all incoming statements and declarations, a real picture emerged about the scale of criminal infringements that people are being subjected to in public places and on means of public transportation³⁹.

A person may turn for help to duty officers at the lower Interior Ministry departments (known in Russia by its initials, the OVD) at any time and irrelevant of where the incident occurred.

Reporting about incidents (crimes, events that threat personal or public safety, as well as other deeds that demand investigation for possible criminal activity or administrative wrongdoing) is accepted and immediately registered around the clock at any Interior Ministry agency including territorial (line) Interior Ministry agencies.

If the denunciation is submitted in person, then the duty officer must not only register it in the Interior Ministry duty service's declarations book, but also complete a submission voucher and hand it to the appealing person. The voucher consists of two parts: the voucher stub and the voucher notification. Both parts have the same registration number. The voucher stub contains information about the person who submits the denunciation, a brief description of the information, a registration number corresponding to that in the denunciation account book, the signature of the person who receives the denunciation, and its registration date. The voucher notification contains information about the person who receives the denunciation, a registration number corresponding to that in the reporting account book, the name of the Interior Ministry department, address, duty telephone number, date of reception, signature, initials and last name of the duty officer. Such a voucher notification must be personally handed to the submitting person because it serves as proof that the denunciation was received.

³⁶ Newsru.com, Russian news, "Russia is recognized as a human trafficking centre" / <http://www.newsru.com/russia/27apr2006/rabstvo.html> Last accessed May 2007.

³⁷ International Organisation for Migration. "Counter-Trafficking assessment and proposals about counter-trafficking capacity building in the Kaliningrad oblast." 2006, http://iom.fi/files/Publications/2006/trafficking_assessment_2006_rus_and_eng.pdf Last accessed May 2007.

³⁸ Angel Coalition, The Anti-trafficking Coalition of Russia and CIS / www.angelcoalition.org/trafficking.htm Last accessed May 2007

³⁹ Ministry of the Interior of the Russian Federation. Consult www.mvdinform.ru

Independent of what type of information about a crime or infringement of the law the denunciations contain, they must all be registered in strict and compulsory order. Only anonymous letters do not get registered. But if the anonymous letter contains information about a planned or an occurring crime, then the information must be relayed to the corresponding operational services.

It must also be understood that, outside the OVD offices, information about incidents and crimes must also be accepted by all on-duty police officers. Within 10 days of the reporting being received, a decision must be reached on whether or not to launch criminal proceedings in the case.

Information may also be sent over the Internet directly to the Interior Ministry's site. The registration of denunciations received over the Internet occurs within three days. A denunciation is examined by the appropriate Interior Ministry subdivision within 30 days of its registration. When necessary, the examination time-period may be prolonged, in which case the appealing parties will be informed of this.

The Interior Ministry recommends that in order to speed up the procedure, people should appeal in written form or personally to the territorial (line) Interior Ministry agencies. If a reporting does not provide answers to the assigned questions raised by corresponding territorial (line) Interior Ministry agencies or if the resolution of these issues is not within the exclusive competency of the ministry's central apparatus subdivisions, then it may be directed for examination to regional Interior Ministry agencies, to Interior Ministry agencies operating in transportation, or departments operating in closed territories and secure sites.

If the OVD officer does not perform his duties in accordance with regulations, then the person who files the denunciation should address the head of the Interior Ministry department. Every Interior Ministry administrative building has stands containing information about the procedure for the acceptance and registration of citizens' denunciations, as well as contact information for the heads of the Interior Ministry departments, with the times of day during which people are received with personal questions.

Unfortunately, the person filing the reporting is often unable to make sure that the above-listed rules are observed, or that the person's attempts to protect oneself against violence and lawlessness are properly protected.

In a speech delivered on August 23, 2005, Interior Minister Rashid Nurgaliyev conceded that the Interior Ministry personnel have shortcomings: "People who come to work for the service are far from always the ones who deserve the high title of defender of order and the Fatherland. Some of them are not highly cultured and have poor levels of education. Proof of the low moral qualities of individual staff and military servicemen may be found in their indifference, callousness and rudeness in regard to citizens whose rights they are called upon to defend. There are also those who use their work in the Interior Ministry in the interests of illegal self-enrichment."⁴⁰

Material collected by human rights organizations contains plenty of evidence confirming that Interior Ministry agencies not only fail to protect citizens' interests, but also violate them themselves.

According to observations⁴¹ compiled by the Public Verdict Foundation nongovernmental organization, torture, severe treatment, and falsification of

⁴⁰ Local government of the Stavropolskiy kray. Interview with the Minister of the Interior. 23.08. 2005 / <http://guvd.stavkray.ru/ministr.doc> Last accessed March 2007

⁴¹ Public Verdict Foundation, Analysis of the cases of torture considered by the Foundation. <http://www.publicverdict.org/ru/articles/research/6250906.html> - in Russian and <http://www.publicverdict.org/eng/articles/library/01250906.html> - in English, 2006 Last accessed May 2007

evidence have turned into a norm of how law enforcement agencies - first among them the Interior Ministry - operate. Out of the 200 criminal cases being pursued by this organization, about 70 % of them deal with torture and severe treatment by the police, with bribery also playing a major role.

At the higher Interior Ministry agencies, the prosecutor's office and human rights organizations, one can still make further appeal.

Additional information can be found in reports of Amnesty International⁴².

2.3.4.2. Judiciary

Russia's judiciary system is developed well enough to protect citizens' rights. Chapter 17 of Russia's Criminal Code, concerning "Crimes against the freedom, honour and dignity of the person," contains statutes protecting people on the territory of Russia against abduction (Article 126), illegal deprivation of liberty (Article 127), human trafficking (Article 127.1), slander (Article 129) and insult (Article 130).

Chapter 16 concerns "Crimes against human life and health". Chapter 18 deals with "Crimes against the sexual inviolability and sexual freedom of the person".

At the same time, as has been noted above, the practice of administering Articles 127.1 and 127.2 are very limited. Despite the large number of applicable cases, the number of instituted criminal cases is incomparably small. The state of affairs is not much better for other articles of Chapter 17⁴³.

It should be taken into account that, in accordance with Russian legislation, one is allowed to file charges in court against unjust actions of state officials or unfair verdicts and decisions made by government agencies, local government authorities, organizations and businesses.

NGOs know of numerous cases where law enforcement officials refuse to accept statements from victims and people who find themselves in danger. At the same time, law enforcement officials often take a prejudiced view of people from the Caucasus and Central Asia, as well of those of African and Asian origin⁴⁴.

Corruption engulfs the courts as well⁴⁵. On the one hand, often appearing in court in defence of victims, nongovernmental organizations are unable to win convictions of the guilty. On the other hand, NGOs often have to deal with cases where the evidence is fabricated against the accused⁴⁶. At the same time, in the final stages of

⁴² Amnesty International. "Russian Federation: beating out confessions in police detention". 22.11.2006 <http://news.amnesty.org/index/ENGEUR460602006> and <http://www.svobodanews.ru/transcript/2007/03/28/20070328193101933.html> Last accessed April 2007

⁴³ Newsru.com, Russian news, "Russia is recognized as a human trafficking center" / <http://www.newsru.com/russia/27apr2006/rabstvo.html> , April 26, 2006. Last accessed April 2007.

⁴⁴ CAC and Memorial describe the situation on the base of their experience in the «Migration Rights» network. They do not want to disclose names and details of the cases, in order to protect their sources. More information is however available at their local offices (contact list in annex).

⁴⁵ Ibidem.

⁴⁶ OHCHR Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. "Russian NGO Shadow Report on the Observance of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment by the Russian Federation for the period from 2001 to 2005", Moscow, May 2006 / <http://www.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cat/docs/ngos/joint-russian-report-new.pdf> Last accessed May 2007

case, the accused often suddenly rescinds the right to a free attorney – who had done everything possible for the case and was provided for free by the human rights organization – and enters into collusion with the judge. This means that in such cases, a more lenient sentence was paid for through a middleman.

There have also been cases⁴⁷ where an accused who refused the help of human rights organization and preferred to pay a bribe instead, was handed down the most severe penalty possible. For this reason, neither middlemen nor bribe-takers should be trusted.

In order to win legal protection, one must use attorneys' assistance, which may be supplied during critical moments by nongovernmental organizations and the lawyers who work with them. It is evident that NGOs are unable to guarantee free legal assistance.

⁴⁷ CAC and Memorial describe the situation on the base of their experience in the «Migration Rights»network. They do not want to disclose names and details of the cases, in order to protect their sources. More information is however available at their offices (contact list in annex).

3. Social security and integration

“The state program for assisting volunteer repatriation into Russia for compatriots living abroad.”⁴⁸

The beginning of 2006 saw the announcement of a new program to repatriate Russians returning from abroad. According to the 1999 law “On the state policy of the RF in relation to compatriots living abroad”⁴⁹.

Compatriots are:

- “citizens of the Russian Federation permanently living outside the borders of the Russian Federation;
- people who were citizens of the USSR, were living in states that were part of the USSR, who received citizenship of these states or who became people without citizenship;
- people who left (emigrated) from the Russian state, Russian republic, RSFSR, USSR and the Russian Federation, who had corresponding citizenships and who became citizens of a foreign state, or who have foreign ‘green cards’ or who became people without citizenship;
- offspring of people who belong to the above-listed groups, excluding offspring of people of the titular nationality of the foreign state.”

Thus, the phrase “a compatriot abroad” encompasses a broad range of people going far beyond the limits of simple Russian citizens. It also presumes that there still will be a selection process, and that not everyone who answers these criteria will take part in the repatriation program.

The program was launched by presidential decree No. 637, from July 22, 2006, “On measures to provide assistance for the volunteer repatriation into the Russian Federation of compatriots living abroad.” This decree ratified the “State program for providing assistance for the volunteer repatriation into the Russian Federation of compatriots living abroad.” Later, August 2006 saw the adoption of a “Provision on the inter-departmental commission for realizing the state program on assistance for the volunteer repatriation into the Russian Federation of compatriots living abroad.”

According to data reported by Federal Migration Service Director Konstantin Romodanovsky, Russia was planning to receive some 50 000 compatriots in 2007. In addition, the five-year program envisioned that there would be 100 000 program participants in 2008 and 150 000 in 2009.

The state program official aims to stimulate and organize the process of compatriots’ voluntary return to Russia by improving the attractive qualities of Russia’s federal regions. It also seeks to compensate the natural population loss of the whole country, along with its specific regions, by attracting compatriots to permanently settle in Russia.

Achieving these goals assumes the resolution of the following problems:

⁴⁸ The program was launched by presidential decree No. 637 on June 22, 2006, called “On measures to provide assistance for the volunteer repatriation into the Russian Federation of compatriots living abroad.”

⁴⁹ Russian Federation. Federal law No. 99-F3 “On state policy of the Russian Federation in relation to compatriots who are abroad.” issued May 24, 1999

To be consulted via <http://www.consultant.ru/dbs/prof.phtml?BOCKQ> Last accessed May 2007

- establishment of proper political, socio-economic and organizational conditions, including the provision of necessary informational support;
- establishment of normative and legislative procedures for the voluntary return process;
- creation of a mechanism for organizing the voluntary return process, including the establishment – through an initial pilot program – of regional programs for supporting voluntary repatriation, including work with returnees in Russian regions;
- providing active state and civilian controls over the return process, including the respect of returnees' rights, returnees meeting their own obligations, and the fulfilment of its obligations by the Russian Federation.

The program is planned for 2006-2012 and is split into three parts. The first part – organization – took place in 2006. It should have been completed with the creation of a normative and legislative framework, and the preparation of regional repatriation programs.

The second stage (2007-2008): voluntary return of state program participants and their family members into Russia within the frameworks of the established regional programs, as well as an analysis of the achieved results.

The third stage (2009-2012): realization of regional repatriation programs and evaluation of their results, a complete analysis, and the implementation of any additional required measures.

The compatriot decides to take part in the state program voluntarily, based on the selected location in which he would like to live and work in Russia.

A program participant receives a certificate established by the federal government confirming his participation.

The state program participants and their family members who relocate for permanent residence in Russia have the right to receive the following state guarantees and forms of social support:

- compensation, from the federal budget, for expenses incurred in the move to the future place of residence;
- compensation, from the federal budget, for expenses incurred for the cost of acquiring documents establishing a person's status as a returnee to Russia;
- a one-time federal grant aimed at helping the participant settle in Russia;
- monthly federal benefit payments received in the absence of wages from a job or other forms of employment that are legal in Russia, up to the point when the person receives Russian citizenship, but for no longer than six months. The payment's size is determined based on the monthly living minimum established in the specific Russian region;
- a federal compensation package that includes access to state and municipal services such as pre-school, general and professional education, social and health provisions, and federal job placement services. The compensation package is paid for through the corresponding government agencies.

The size of state guarantees, their distribution, and scope of social measures included in the program are established by the Russian federal government.

Other state guarantees, social support services, employment programs, and housing guarantees are provided within the frameworks of established regional relocation programs.

The program establishes three categories of territories from which compatriots may choose their points of relocation.

- Category A territories primarily include strategically important border regions that have seen drops in local population. Participants and family members who relocate to this category of territories receive full state guarantees and all forms of social support envisioned by the program.

- Category B territories include regions that have large investment projects that demand a mass influx of returnees due to the absence of the required labour force on the local labour market. Russian regions where such territories are located are characterized by fast-growing social and economic development rates exceeding the Russian average, and a burden from migration lower than that in other regions. Participants and family members who relocate to this category of territories obtain state guarantees and social support envisioned by the program, except for monthly benefit payments received in the absence of income from jobs or other forms of employment that are legal in Russia.
- Category C territories include territories with stable social and economic development rates that have seen drops in local population and (or) migration outflows over a period of three or more years. Participants and family members who relocate to this category of territories receive state guarantees and social support envisioned by the program, except for monthly benefit payments received in the absence of income from jobs or other forms of employment that are legal in Russia, and also the one-time settlement support grant.

Participation in the state program gives the participant and members of his family who are foreign citizens or people without citizenship priority rights in receiving temporary residence permits, standard residence permits and Russian citizenship.

State program participants and (or) their family members who leave the assigned territory for another permanent residence location within two years must, in established order, repay the one-time settlement support grant.

People who resettle into Russia must be supplied with the following information:

- the contents of the state program, the relocation conditions, the required administrative procedures, and the rights and obligations of program participants;
- the available social support measures and the size of provided state guarantees;
- which potential territories for resettlement are most suitable for the person's employment, in accordance with the program participant's professional and job qualifications;
- re-education or job qualification improvement opportunities, as well as housing conditions.

The official information packet must be widely distributed so that required details reach the potential program participants. The program envisions its wide coverage by Russian and foreign media outlets.

A network of foreign FMS service outlets is also envisioned. Responsibility for its creation falls on temporary groups of specialists from the FMS, the Russian Foreign Ministry, other interested federal institutions from the executive branch, and Russian consulates.

Potential program participants must submit their applications in person. The federal government determines the application form and other documents that must be filed in the application process.

Having selected a relocation alternative and completed the required paperwork, the compatriot obtains the status of federal program participant, which confirms his and his family members' rights and obligations, particularly in the areas of state guarantees and social support programs that correspond to the selected territorial relocation category.

Program participants and their family members are supplied with documents required for relocation into Russia, including a certificate of program membership and, if necessary, an entrance visa.

The expenses for travel for program participants and their family members are compensated according to the following tariff scheme:

- railroad transportation - sleeper cabins of any category;
- air transportation - economy class tickets;

- internal marine transportation - category II seat tariffs;
- sea transportation - category III sleeper cabins.

In addition, a family of up to three members has full expenses paid for transportation of their belongings in a five-ton container. Families of more than three are allowed two five-ton containers.

Also eligible for compensation are expenses incurred when program participants and their family members relocate using regular bus routes, move their belongings by car up to the point of final destination, and pay customs duties and taxes placed on the export of goods from the compatriots' country of origin.

Compensation payments are made through the federal budget by regional FMS authorities based on actual, documental confirmation of incurred expenses after the relocation party's registration at their new place of residence.

The federal program participants are allowed to bring any amounts of property without limits as to its cost or weight, including means of transportation the compatriots had prior to their entry into Russia.

The program participation certificate serves as documental confirmation of the person's right to bring personal property across the Russia border, according to the above-mentioned conditions. Its copy is attached to other documents required for bringing goods into Russia and is presented by the transferring party at the point of entry.

Russian government resolution "On regulations for payment to participants of the state program for assisting the volunteer repatriation of compatriots living abroad into the Russian Federation, and their family members, of monthly benefits in the absence of income from labour, business or other forms of employment."⁵⁰

The resolution establishes a monthly benefits payment awarded to participants of the state program for assisting the volunteer repatriation of compatriots living abroad into the Russian Federation, and to all their family members, in the absence of their income from labor, business or other form of employment up to when they receive Russian citizenship. The benefits payments are made for no longer than six months, at a rate of 50 percent of the minimum subsistence rate established in each specific Russian region. The monthly benefits payment is paid to the state program participants, and their family members, who move into category A territories.

In order to receive the monthly benefits payments, the state program participant submits (in Russian) a declaration for payment of monthly benefits to the regional migration service authorities, together with a memo stating that the person is not earning wages from employment, business or other forms of activity.

The state program participant submits the statement in person.

The date of submission is considered to be the date on which the participant presented all of the documents required for resolving the monthly benefits payment issue.

The FMS department makes the decision on monthly benefit payments, based on the state program participant's place of registration, within 15 days of the declaration's submission.

The memo confirming the absence of any job is resubmitted on a monthly basis to the FMS department at the new place of residence.

The first Russian regions to join the pilot relocation program are: Amursk, Irkutsk, Kaliningrad, Kaluga, Krasnoyarsk, Lipetsk, Novosibirsk, Primorsky Region, Tambov, Tver, Tyumen, Khabarovsk.

⁵⁰ Russian Federation. Russian government resolution No. 8 from January 15, 2007, city of Moscow. Entered into force January 20, 2007.

To be consulted via <http://www.consultant.ru/dbs/prof.phtml?BOCKQ> Last accessed March 2007

In 2007, the Federal Migration Service plans to open offices in Ukraine, Moldova, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. Corresponding negotiations are currently underway with these states' governments.

In the future, the FMS plans to open offices in additional countries, including those in the European Union.

One does not have to be a member of the state repatriation program in order to obtain information about conditions existing in the various regions. One can learn about the program's future development through Russian consulates.

At the same time, one must be very careful about the presented information, and check it against other available sources. According to information from one civic organization, authorities in the Kaluga region offered housing to returnees that was unsuitable for living, being located in an environmentally hazardous zone damaged by the Chernobyl nuclear disaster.

3.1.Regions with no reintegration and return opportunities

The Chechen Republic must certainly be listed among those that are unsafe for return, with ethnic Russians who used to live there unable to do so at this time. A large exodus of this group from other North Caucasus republics was a feature of the 1990s as well. Some 250 000 Russians have migrated from Chechnya.

According to calculations from the 2002 census and the annual migration movement reports, the number of Russians living in the North Caucasus has dropped by 405 000-410 000 people. Between 1989 and 2002, the number of Russians living in the North Caucasus fell from 1.36 million to 950 000-955 000, a drop of 30 %⁵¹.

The situation in the Republic of North Ossetia-Alania is among those in the North Caucasus most suitable for the Russian population's return, according to information from official sources.

The Republic of Ingushetia has developed its own program for the Russian population's return. However it is impossible to recommend this program for use, since it has come under attack from certain criminal elements. Six people were killed as a result of an attack on senior Ingush officials in the Sunzhenskaya district of the republic on July 6, 2006. The commander of the Ingush OMON, Musa Nalgiyev, and the district's deputy head, Galina Gubina, were among the casualties. In the opinion of the republic's prosecutor, Makhmud-Ali Kalimatov, the group was attacked because it was involved in the return and accommodation program set up for the Russian population in Ingushetia. Since January 2006, the Memorial human rights group has recorded a number of attacks on Russian families in Sunzhenskaya district settlements: there have been attempts at arson, grenades have been thrown, and one family was simply shot dead.⁵²

On the other hand, the integration or reintegration of natives of the Caucasus in other regions of Russia is also meeting resistance because of local anti-Caucasian attitudes.

⁵¹ A.B. Dzadiev, on assignment from the Carnegie Foundation / http://www.eawarnru/pub//bull/webhome/70_18.htm Last accessed February 2007

⁵² HRC Memorial, A. Chercasov, "Terror against the return of the Russian population to Ingushetia," published September 6, 2006 / <http://www.hro.org/war/2006/06/09-1.php> Last accessed March 2007

From the ecological point of view, 10 years of war have turned the mountain regions of Chechnya unsuitable for inhabitation. Problems are also arising with farmlands due to the persistent danger from landmines and the ruinous state of the soils.

In addition, the ecological situation in Russia's north poses a subsistence problem even for the peoples who traditionally populate this land. With the onset of new post-Soviet times, where many of the administrative prohibitions on residence movement have been abolished, the rush of people from Siberia and the northern territories into European Russia has intensified.

3.2. Housing, accommodation

The problem of housing has been traditionally one of the most difficult to resolve in the Soviet Union. It has survived, in a slightly altered form, in Russia to this day.

The lack of housing and the poor quality of that which already exists is an Achilles' heel for the country. The overwhelming burden of housing problems falls on the shoulders of ordinary citizens. The law "On the privatisation of the housing fund"⁵³ from April 7, 1991, No. 1541-1 (December 29, 2004 edition, with June 15, 2006 alterations), classified the property that people were already using as their official holdings. This was the tiny part of state property actually obtained by ordinary citizens during the privatisation push.

At the same time, each person was only given one single opportunity to privatise his property. Citizens who had been living in dilapidated housing and were in line to receive new state housing never privatised their old homes. People who lived in dormitories or public residences found themselves the worst off, since they had nothing to privatise at all. In this way, the principle of people's equality before the law was violated.

The process of providing shelter for the least protected (most vulnerable) segments of society continue to grind to a halt. During a December 15, 2006 government meeting, Regional Development Minister Vladimir Yakovlev reported that some 4.5 million families were waiting in line to receive better housing. At the same time, the government had a legal obligation to provide better housing for 1.2 million families. He noted that the expected wait for better housing stood at 15-20 years.⁵⁴ It must be taken into account that in many regions, a family may only be placed in line for housing after having received permanent registration there for a period of 5-10 years.

The federal state statistics service provides the following figures for the country's housing situation in its latest report: In 2005, a Russian individual had an average of 20.9 m² of living space. In cities, this figure stood at 20.5 m². In rural regions, it was 21.8 m². Numerous surveys have shown that two-thirds of Russians remain unsatisfied with their housing accommodations, and that every fourth family is living in housing of poor or very poor quality.

In 2004, Russia adopted a new edition of the Housing Code (Housing Code)⁵⁵ that entered into force on March 1, 2005. It was not well received by a large segment of the population. The

⁵³ Russian Federation. Federal law "On the privatisation of the housing fund" from December 29, 2004, with amendments made on June 15, 2006.

To be consulted via <http://www.consultant.ru/dbs/prof.phtml?BOCKQ> Last accessed March 2007

⁵⁴ Russian News and Information Agency. RIA Novosti, December 15, 2006.

⁵⁵ Russian Federation. Federal Law: Housing Code of the Russian Federation, December 24, 2004.

new edition was focused entirely on the rights of proprietors, reducing the rights of dwellers to a minimum. The Soviet Union had implemented the “propiska” policy of residence permits, which allowed only residents to occupy living quarters. The abolition of this practice was one of the Council of Europe’s main demands on the Russian government during membership negotiations. However, by altering the “propiska” program into one of registrations, which continues to limit people’s right to free movement, Russian authorities also failed to preserve its positive aspects - the guaranteed right to housing. In the Soviet era, a tenant who was registered in an apartment could not be expelled from it under any circumstances, which often lead to all types of illegal activities - such as false marriages struck for one person to win the right to live on the other’s property. This right to property was retained even in the event of divorce. Prior to its 2004 version, the Housing Code allowed new dwellers to use property that officially belonged to another party if the new resident was a member of the property owner’s family. This regulation retained residence rights for former spouses, children and the property owner’s parents.

The new Housing Code allows property owners to expel people living on his property regardless of whether they have residence permits or other housing. This regulation also applies to the property owner’s former family members. This regulation is stipulated by point 4, article 30 of the Housing Code: “In the event of the cessation of family relations with the property owner, the former family member does not retain the right to use the given property, unless otherwise stipulated by agreement between the proprietor and the former family member. If the former family member of the property owner lacks the means to obtain or gain the right to other housing, and also if the proprietor’s former family members property status and other worthy considerations do not permit them to secure other housing, the right to use housing that belongs to the stated owner may be retained by the former family member for a limited period of time determined in court. At the same time, the court may obligate the proprietor to provide different housing to a former spouse and other family members on whose behalf the proprietor is making alimony payments, if they so desire.”

It is clear from the above text that the property owner may demand that his former wife leaves his dwelling after a divorce. For this to happen, it suffices that she has some other form of housing, no matter how poor its quality. The obligation to provide housing for a wife or parent appears only in case they receive his alimony payments - in other words, are unable to work for themselves. Moreover, if the divorce court awards underage children to the wife and she receives alimony payments for their upkeep, then the children too are considered to be former family members and may be expelled together with their mother.

The family members may avoid such a fate by signing a contract or some other agreement with the proprietor. However such form of relations has not yet been accepted by Russian society and is foreign to much of the populace.

Another innovation that upset the population was a time limit set on a person’s right to privatise a property. In 2004, that deadline was set at March, 2005. After long and furious debates, the original deadline was extended by five years. Thus, proprietors who receive their housing prior to March 1, 2010 will be able to register it as their property. And those who live in unacceptable housing longer than others and obtain their new dwellings after that date will never win be able to own that property.

The government is thus compelling citizens to own property. At the same time, the mortgage system is only coming into existence. Banks are charging huge percentage points for housing loans while also demanding large down payments, making it all but impossible for most

people - earning low wages while renting property at exorbitant rates - to obtain their own homes.

3.2.1. Property restitution and/or compensation (in former zones of conflict or disaster)

Russia has no property restitution law. There are currently several appeals before the European Court concerning the denial of restitution of property that was taken away by authorities or the various government agencies. No verdicts have yet been reached in these cases.

As for restitution itself - or the return of property whose chain of transfer from one proprietor to another had been interrupted - one must note a Constitutional Court ruling made April 2005. It said that if the last proprietor was an “innocent purchaser,” then the property may not be returned to an owner who had been cheated at an earlier stage. Instead of restitution, that person should be seeking compensation from the cheating party.

Russian courts have turned down every single case concerning restitution for lost or seized property in the Republic of Chechnya. The main basis for these denials was a Russian government resolution on compensation payments, which fail to cover even a minor portion of the lost property.

The compensation is awarded only to residents of the Republic of Chechnya, but the payment sum is small, not paid to everyone, and drawn out over extended periods of time even when made.

An April 20, 1997 government resolution No. 510⁵⁶ set the limit of property compensation payments to RUB 120 000, which prior to the 1998 default equalled about USD 20 000. Today it is worth about USD 4000-5000—, a too small amount for a family to obtain housing.

A July 4, 2003 government resolution No. 404⁵⁷ set compensation for completely destroyed housing in the Republic of Chechnya at RUB 300 000 plus an additional RUB 50 000 for lost property. It should be underscored that this decision concerns only people who continue to live in Chechnya. Families whose housing is deemed to be less than 80 % ruined are not eligible for compensation. An official representative of an international human rights organization believes that the new level set for compensation payments is enough for a family to gain new housing if that sum is paid in full (in other words, if the family is not forced to pay bribes to secure the payment), and if the family is not forced to use the money to pay off debts and cover their daily expenses.

Point 10 of resolution No. 404 gave several ministries a two-month timeframe in which to make required changes to resolution No. 510, concerning the size of compensation payments for lost and seized property and the procedures under which they are paid. People waited for these changes with hope - for two years, rather than two months. Things came to an end on August 4, 2005 when through point 19 of resolution No. 489, the government rescinded point 10 of resolution No. 404, among many of its other decisions.

⁵⁶ Russian Federation. Government resolution No. 510 from April 30, 1997 “On the rules for paying compensation for lost property or belongings to citizens who suffered as a result of the resolution to the crisis in the Chechen Republic, who permanently left the republic.”

To be consulted via <http://www.consultant.ru/dbs/prof.phtml?BOCKQ> Last accessed March 2007

⁵⁷ Russian Federation. Government resolution No. 404 from July 4, 2003 “On the rules for paying compensation for lost property or belongings to citizens who suffered as a result of the resolution to the crisis in the Chechen Republic, who are permanently living in the republic.”

To be consulted via <http://www.consultant.ru/dbs/prof.phtml?BOCKQ> Last accessed March 2007

In addition, the payments based on resolution No. 505 are made excruciatingly slow. Since 1997, only 36 792 families have received compensation. Payments have been made to 45 447 families.⁵⁸ As a result, thousands of families that once lived in the Republic of Chechnya, no matter their nationality, remain scattered without any housing throughout various regions of Russia.

Another worrying factor is the difference in size of compensation payments made to those who returned to Chechnya and those who preferred not to do so. Between 1997 and 2003, no compensation payments were made in Chechnya at all. But after 2003, IDPs who stayed on in Chechnya began receiving payments between two and two-and-a-half times higher than those living in other regions of Russia. Since most people who permanently left Chechnya are ethnic Russians, politicians who speculate on ethnic grounds started to complain about discrimination against ethnic Russians, hoping to divide the former neighbours and potentially start a conflict between them.

In line with compensations paid by the federal government, a series of international organizations and NGO's (UNHCR, Dutch Council for Refugees, International Committee of the Red Cross, Doctors Without Borders, and others) offer home-building assistance to IDPs. For the most part, these organizations provide tents for temporary housing, repair dormitories and organize living quarters in the destroyed housing sector.

The Ingush, the former residents of the Prigorodny district of North Ossetia-Alania, who were banished from their homes in 1992 during the armed stage of the Ingush-Ossetian conflict, receive compensation if they agree to return to their homes or – as authorities are not able to secure returnees in some villages – to settle in a new place.

These compensations are several times higher than those paid to the residents of Chechnya. They range from RUB 700 000 to 2 million per family, a sum that enables a family to obtain real, acceptable housing.

3.2.2. Housing programs by return areas

Each region has its own program for housing construction that envisions share participation by the citizens. Overall, the system for providing people this state housing that served as the basis for living accommodations in the Soviet era, is gradually dying out. It is not receiving an adequate substitute due to people's general poverty and the absence of a developed financial credits system.

For example:

In St. Petersburg there are different housing programs: Hypothec crediting, moving of shabby habitation, « Accessible habitation to the youth », Granting of habitation to state employees. More details you may familiarize on the website of the Administration of St. Petersburg.⁵⁹ These issues are often discussed in the magazine “Expert North-West”.⁶⁰ In the St. Petersburg and Leningrad region one can buy or inherit the habitation, or the habitation can be given under the contract of social hiring.

In the Leningrad region the program of giving the habitation under the contract of social hiring is aimed only to the so-called «permanent inhabitants» of the Leningrad region. People who move to Leningrad region from other places can't rely on being included into

⁵⁸ Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC). S. Gannushkina, “Climate of fear: the challenges of return and reintegration in the North Caucasus”, September 2006, p.23; Contact: e.mail of author: sgannush@mtu-net.

⁵⁹ To be consulted via <http://www.kgp-estate.spb.ru/fist.asp>

⁶⁰ Expert North-West Magazine Online. To be consulted via www.expert.ru/sever/

this program. We couldn't get the concrete information about the program for the returnees according to the decree published by the president of Russia and the governmental order (if Leningrad region is included into this governmental program).^{61 62}

In the reception department of the Government of the Leningrad region there was no information as to where the returnees can get this information.⁶³

In St. Petersburg only those citizens of RF who are inscribed into the special waiting list of those who are in need can receive the habitation under the contract of social hiring.

In order to be inscribed into this list one has:

- ↪ to live in St. Petersburg more than 10 years and have a permanent registration;
- ↪ to have low income;
- ↪ to have maximum 9 m² of living space in a separate apartment for one person and 15 m² of living space in the shared apartment (where more than one family lives)⁶⁴.

The queue in this waiting list advances very slow and people are waiting for 15 years and more⁶⁵.

3.2.2. Opportunities of building a house

Opportunities to build a house depend on two factors: the presence of property and the required sum of money. In large cities such as Moscow and St. Petersburg, one can only build a house on the city's outskirts. Only the richest can afford themselves such enterprises. Most city residents live in high-rise apartment buildings, where the living area takes up a relatively small amount of space. In smaller regional cities, housing is being built of locally available construction materials. In agricultural regions, well-to-do people build Western-style cottages, usually as additional, recreational homes.

3.2.3.1. Conditions of obtaining land property

Russia's Land Code allows people to obtain land as private property.

Chapter 15 of the Land Code states:

- a) The property of citizens and legal entities (private property) is recognized as land that is obtained by citizens and legal entities based on principles determined by the laws of the Russian Federation.
- b) Citizens and legal entities have equal rights to obtaining land and property. Land properties that are in state or municipal hands may be offered for purchase to citizens and legal entities, except for plots of lands that according to this Code may not be in private hands, as per corresponding federal legislation.

⁶¹ Russian Federation. Decree of the president of Russia N 2006/06/26-
<http://www.kremlin.ru/text/psmes/2006/06/107741.shtml> Last accessed March 2007

⁶² Russian Federation. Order of the government of Russian Federation, N 622, 20/10/2006
<http://www.government.ru/government/governmentactivity/rfgovernmentdecisions/archive/2006/10/24/3164027.htm> Last accessed March 2007

⁶³ Interview of Elena Smirnova (Member of the NGO House of Peace and Non-Violence, telephone +7 921 951 03 45, e-mail peace@mail.wplus.net) with the official in the reception department of the Government of Leningrad region who refused to present herself (the name and family name), 2007

⁶⁴ Information desk of the Administration of the Central district of St. Petersburg, 2007

⁶⁵ Interview with Mr Smirnov Dmitriy, St. Petersburg, 2007

- c) Foreign citizens, people without citizenship and foreign legal entities may not have ownership rights to land plots that are located on border territories whose list is determined by the president of the Russian Federation in accordance to the federal law “On the state border of the Russian Federation,” nor on other specially designated territories of the Russian Federation, in accordance to federal laws.

A December 29, 2006 federal law altered Chapter 20 of the Land Code, which now bans the permanent sale of land:

- a) Land properties are offered permanently (without time limits) to state municipal establishments, state enterprises, and also state government and local government agencies.
- b) Citizens are not granted the right to use land properties permanently (without time limits).

If a citizen inherited the right to own state or municipal property for life before the new Land Code rules went into effect, then he will retain such rights to this property in accordance to Chapter 21 of the code.

However the Land Code also offers the emergency use of land, without compensations.

Excerpts from Chapter 24 state:

Citizens may be issued emergency, non-compensated use of plots from lands that belong to citizens or legal entities, in accordance with an agreement or service allotment.

In addition the state executive branch or municipal government agencies may offer plots from lands in state or municipal holdings to people with whom they reached state or municipal contracts for the construction of real estate, which is carried out entirely at the expense of the federal budget, budgets of the subjects of the Russian Federation or the local budgets, based on an order made in accordance with the federal law on placing orders on the delivery of goods, completion of works, or performance of services for state or municipal needs, for the period of construction of said property.

Service allotments are offered without compensation in emergency order, for the use of workers in specific sectors of the economy, including transportation, forestry and timber industries, hunting, state nature reserves and national parks.

Service allotments are presented to workers of these organizations for the duration of the establishment of labour relations, based on applications made following the decisions of the corresponding organization on properties belonging to them.

Based on part 3 of Chapter 30.1 of the Land Code, it is possible to offer land that belongs to state or municipal agencies under a rent agreement for individual housing projects. This is done based on applications from citizens interested in such property.

Within two days of receiving such an application, the state executive branch or municipal government agency may reach a decision on holding an auction for the sale of such property, or the right to reach a leaser’s agreement, or to publish an announcement on it accepting offers for the rent of such property, with indication of its location and area, in a periodical print publication that has been authorized by the Russian government, the highest executive agency of the Russian government, or the head of the municipality, and also to issue an announcement on accepting said applications on the official Internet site of the Russian government or municipality (if it has one).

It is also possible to offer land for specific use to selected groups of citizens in accordance with a special instruction from the Russian government and regional authority.

According to Chapter 46, the rent of property may be halted on the initiative of the leaser, in case the renter does not use the land in accordance with the renter's agreement specifications.

Thus, rent may be halted if the renter fails to build housing or to reach a required level in its construction within the agreed timeframes.

3.2.3.2.Relevant approximate prices

Prices for both land and construction depend on the region and the specific situation, which changes relatively quickly. A catalogue of various building materials and construction plans may be found on the site <http://roszem.ru> .

3.2.3.3.Available credits, subsidies and other forms of help

It is fairly difficult to receive credits for construction, but the system of lending is slowly developing. Thus, the Moscow Credit Bank offers credits for the construction of a dacha (small summer home) or cottage on security of the land under the proposed construction site.

Loans are issued in both US dollar (USD) and rouble (RUB) terms. The loans range from USD 25 000 to USD 750 000, or from RUB 700 000 to 10 million. The credit term runs up to 10 years. For dollar loans, the annual mortgage rate is set at 12.5 %, after income is confirmed by the 2-NDFL (Tax on Income of a Private Individual) form, or at 13.5 % in case income is confirmed by some other means. On rouble loans, the annual rates are 13.5 % and 14.5 %, respectively.

The maximum credit size under this program can be set at 75 % of the land property value. For preliminary calculations of the loan size, one can use the mortgage calculator available on the bank's internet site. One does not need to have permanent registration in the Moscow region in order to borrow from the Moscow Credit Bank. The aggregate family income is taken into account in available credit calculations.

The bank guarantees a quick review of loan applications - no more than four days from the moment all documents are filed. In addition, Moscow Credit Bank staff can visit the client's office to pick up the completed application package.

The program permits early loan repayment without any fines, starting from the seventh month from the date of the credit issue. The minimum early payment sum is USD 500 or RUB 15 000 (depending on the credit currency).

3.2.4.Opportunities of buying real estate

3.2.4.1.Legal conditions

Russian citizens usually encounter no problems in most regions. Exceptions occur in the Krasnodar region and Kabardino-Balkaria, where there are local limits set on the amount of property that may be obtained by a person who does not have local

registration based on place of residence. In certain settlement of North Osetia house purchases may be difficult for ethnic Ingush⁶⁶.

3.2.4.2.Eventual obstacles for certain groups

There are no legal obstacles. However difficulties with housing purchases may arise as a result of lawless actions on the part of authorities, or due to xenophobia addressed toward people from the North Caucasus, Central Asia and the Far East.

3.2.4.3.Relevant approximate prices

Housing prices are subject to great volatility. However it is clear that they have continued to rise over a fairly long stretch of time. One can follow the rise and fall of real estate prices by looking at various Internet sites. One of them,⁶⁷ presents prices in the various Russian regions.

Information about real estate conditions in a number of Russian regions is presented below. Experts say that although prices continue to climb rapidly in some regions, overall the situation has begun to stabilize and is becoming more and more attractive for consumers.

Moscow real estate

The condition of the Moscow real estate market is important for both ordinary citizens looking for best housing possible, and for investors seeking not only to preserve but also expand their capital.

The most important recent characteristic of Moscow real estate, according to experts, is the recently established stabilization of the market. Annual growth of new properties continues to come in at 70-100 %, but prices have not collapsed as a result. In 2006, an incredible growth in property prices checked the mettle of Moscow consumers. The greatest price hikes occurred in districts filled with new construction sites, where prices almost doubled. Runner up is the Moscow resale property market, where prices jumped 80 %.

Studying various segments of the market shows a monthly grow of 10 % on Moscow's resale property market during the first quarter of 2006. However, the monthly growth rate slowed to 3 % over the summer. Fall months saw an incredible growth in the number of available properties - 75 %, which prompted the market to enter a period of stagnation.

Price increases in the new housing market were similar to those seen in resale. Experts say some 340 building sites were being developed in Moscow at the same time. Average new housing prices approached, and in some cases even eclipsed, those in the resale market.

In the suburbs, the property market saw quick development and hit new price peaks in the city's most promising and prestigious regions. These included the city's western and Dmitrovka districts.

⁶⁶ Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC). S. Gannushkina, "Climate of fear: the challenges of return and reintegration in the North Caucasus", September 2006, p.23; Contact: e.mail of author: sgannush@mtu-net.

⁶⁷ For more information on property across the world: http://dijimost.ru/v_rossii.php/

Meanwhile prices began to differentiate on Moscow's private property and commercial real estate markets. This led to a stabilization of lower quality property prices, and a steady rise in the price of high-standard real estate. The real estate market is separated into two sectors - first class, which includes elite housing and business-class commercial property; and second class, composed of lower and average quality housing.

Prices on elite housing are expected to keep climbing in the near future. Prices of real estate are expected to go up by an annualised rate of 25 % over the first half of 2007.

Prices are predicted to grow by a monthly rate of 2 to 4 % for business-class commercial property. This rise may be explained by large companies' financial growth over 2006.

Demand will be more moderate in economy class housing because most consumers are currently expecting a drop in prices. This is quite possible, since those prices dropped by 0,6 % on average in 2006. A large amount of this property is expected to appear on the market in May, which should stabilize prices in June.

According to Real Estate Market Indicators, the average economy-class property in Moscow cost USD 4209/m² in the first quarter of 2007. Apartments in the old five-storey buildings, made out of "poor" brick, fell in price by 0,3 %. A square meter there cost USD 3838. On average, Moscow property prices dropped by 0,14 % over the first month of spring.

A recently published annual report by RGI International issued the first ever review of elite real estate prices. It costs a company USD 1300 to 3000 to develop a square meter of such property. Its resale value is USD 20 000/m².

St. Petersburg real estate

St. Petersburg real estate prices continue to grow on a monthly basis. Currently, the average city price per square meter is USD 2500. The minimum square meter price is USD 1500, and goes up to about USD 6000 in the city's more prestigious regions.

The price range is relatively broad: if a square meter in the Admiralteisky district costs slightly more than USD 1500, then it reaches almost USD 5000 on Nevsky Prospekt. Obviously, the highest property prices per square meter are in one-room apartments. Two- and three-room apartment prices are about the same, but a square meter in four-room apartments is almost 1,5 times cheaper. The lowest prices are on panel housing, and the highest are for brick ones built in the 1960s.

The Moskovsky and Primorsky districts are the most expensive among outlying residential area. Moskovsky's attraction is the predominance of solid Stalin-era buildings, while Primorsky's offers the large number of one- and two-room apartments.

Two-room apartments are in higher demand than three-room ones. Demand for apartments of four rooms and more is lower still. The highest turnover is seen in one-room apartments. Overall, statistics show that property prices in St. Petersburg are rising by an annual rate of 50 %.

A tremendous jump in the price of elite real estate is also predicted. Apartment prices will also continue to grow, but at slower rates. However, elite property rates are expected to taper off at about USD 7000/m².

Real estate in the regions

Over recent years, the real estate market has begun to develop not only in Moscow and the Moscow district, but also in other more distant and less developed regions. We will confirm this by examining the situation in several randomly selected regions.

The first on our list is Sochi. As might be known, this city is competing for the right to host the 2014 Winter Games. Before this, the government adopted a program for the “Development of Sochi as a mountain-climatic resort over the years 2006-2014.” Concerning area housing market - due to demand, prices and construction volume - experts believe that the Sochi market is one of the fastest developing in all of Russia. It is the only one among the southern regions to have real estate separated into three segments - elite, business and economy class. Prices on elite property range from USD 3000 to 10 000/m²; prices in the business class go between USD 1500-2500/m²; and economy class housing could cost between USD 900-1500/m². Prices on the resale market range from USD 1200 to 3000/m².

The situation is slightly different in the neighbouring city of Krasnodar, whose real estate market is currently in a holding pattern, following a drop and then a renewed firming of prices. Market analysts believe that real estate investment risks here are still within a reasonable range. The average square meter of housing property costs USD 1000. The problem is that authorities have completely ruled out the possibility of extensive city expansion. The city already stands on the edge of federally assigned agricultural lands, while the city’s expansion to the opposite bank of the Kuban River is ruled out by the fact that this territory already belongs to the neighbouring region of Adygeya. As a result, new property construction may only be realized by raising old property - first of all, the smaller-storied buildings that account for 70 % of Krasnodar’s housing market. At the same time, the city’s housing capacity remains at a satisfactory level.

In Novosibirsk, supply remained higher than demand throughout the year, but the situation began to level out towards the end of the year. Still, no extreme real estate activity occurred ahead of New Year’s holidays. Rather, a normal business atmosphere remained. For the most part, some consumers tried to round out their year’s business by acquiring property, and prices continued to grow. Compared to the same period in the previous year, prices rose by 35 % and reached an average of USD 1700/m². Real estate agents note that the number of mortgages – which are becoming every more popular – also rose.

The last on our list is Russia’s easternmost region and its largest city - Vladivostok. The situation here is beginning to stabilize after a small price drop, with real estate prices starting to grow again. While the average real estate price is USD 1200/m², an appreciable differentiation is emerging among the various sectors. Elite class prices range from USD 1500 to 2000/m², while business-class property comes in at USD 1200 to 1500/m², with economy-class property being cheapest of all at USD 850 to 1200/m².

3.2.4.4. Available credits and subsidies

The mortgage system is poorly developed, with large bank credits available only to the rich, and even those on enslaving terms. The numerous credit programs offered

by Russian banks may be found on the site <http://www.ipohelp.ru/queries.html>. It lists all Russian banks that offer mortgage loans, and the criteria by which they may be obtained. However looking at this data, one should keep in mind that the initial mortgage rates quoted by the banks are, as a rule, lower than those actually available to consumers. In mid-March 2007, the “Kommersant” newspaper conducted an investigation into the discrepancy.⁶⁸

Newspaper correspondents and their analysts came to the following conclusion: the actual cost of credits taken out by customers is far higher than the percentage rates indicated by the banks when they initially issue the loans. Using methodology employed by Russia’s Central Bank, the newspaper calculated the actual percentage rates paid on loans issued by 19 banks. The “Kommersant” report⁶⁹ claims that while the stated and actual percentage figures diverge for housing mortgages by only 0.6-2.4 % and for car loans by 0.2-24.1 %, the actual costs – after including hidden commissions – on personal emergency need and commercial express-credits diverged by 54 % and 71 % respectively. Bank leaders for diverging stated and actual loan rates among the various sectors were Soyuz bank (mortgage), Russkiy Standard (car loans), Alfa Bank (emergency needs), and SKB-Bank (commercial express-credits).

As part of their investigation “Kommersant” also published a chart of stated and actual interest rates charged by the banks. This chart shows that mortgage rates claimed by various banks range between 10 and 14 %, while in reality it ranged between 10.6 and 15.1 %.

3.2.5.Opportunities of renting a house or apartment

Prices have soared immensely in recent years. On average, over three years, rent price has doubled and even tripled. The prices of rented housing may take up to 70 % of a family’s income, which often means the loss of any hope of purchasing or building a personal home.

3.2.5.1.Possible obstacles for certain groups

There are no existing legal restrictions in this sphere. However people from the Caucasus and Central Asian republics often may – and do – encounter problems when trying to rent a room or an apartment due to rising xenophobic sentiments to this group of people across the country. In addition, people with disabilities and large families may also face problems.

There is also prejudice against various types of minorities, which may also cause problems when attempting to rent housing. For example in St. Petersburg rather often one may see the announcements stick on the facades of the houses that only a “Russian family can rent the apartment”.⁷⁰ As for single women, they encounter no difficulties renting apartments, should they have the required financing.

3.2.5.2.Relevant approximate prices

⁶⁸ Kommersant, Russia’s daily online. No. 42, March 16, 2007. To be consulted via <http://www.kommersant.com/archive.asp> Last accessed May 2007.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Interview with Elena Vilenskaya, Member of the NGO The House of Peace and Non-Violence, St. Petersburg, May 2007; telephone +7 921 951 03 45, e-mail peace@mail.wplus.net

The prices of rented homes and apartments have been growing steadily over recent years. Currently in Moscow, monthly rent of a meagre one-room apartment in a remote city district costs at least USD 400-450. Rent for a two-room apartment in a remote district is at least USD 600 a month. At the same time, real estate firms note that each apartment has several potential bidders. In major cities, the prices are lower than those in Moscow, but still very high.

Renting housing in rural districts does not pose a problem, except for regions near large cities from where people can travel daily to work into these cities.

Currently there is a growth of a relatively wealthy category of people who are prepared to purchase or rent property outside the city in order to live in beneficial ecological conditions. Such homes are very expensive.

3.2.5.3. Available subsidies

Recent years have witnessed significant changes to legislation in the sphere of citizen's housing accommodations.

A December 31, 2005 government resolution No. 865 adopted a new edition of the "Housing" special federal program, allocating spending through 2010. This resolution embraced a national project for the issue of housing accommodations to all categories of citizens for which the government is obligated to provide under federal law.

It plans to secure housing for servicemen, for participants of radiation accidents and catastrophes cleanup operations, those relocated from the Baikonur space launch facility, and to the benefits-eligible categories of forced migrants. It also foresees payment of subsidies to citizens being relocated from the Far North and its surrounding regions. Finally, it plans to finance complete construction, reconstruction and modernization of housing assigned to people being relocated from shabby or disaster-state housing.

Since 2006, the financing of all housing accommodation expenses has been funnelled through a new government acquisition agency – Rosstroi of Russia (Russian Construction).

The mechanism for realizing these orders was approved in a March 21, 2006 government resolution No. 153 "On certain questions concerning the realization of the sub-program 'On meeting state obligations for guaranteeing housing to categories of citizens provided for by federal legislation' of the special federal program Housing, established for 2002-2010." It envisions regional government agencies issuing state housing certificates to the assigned categories of citizens. These certificates would be based on the existing location of those forced migrants recognized as in need of better housing conditions. At the same time, financing for these needs is assigned through the federal budget.

The state housing certificates are planned and released, based on two calculations.

First, the calculations are made based on the average cost of a square meter of housing in Russia. On the whole, forced migrants here stand to gain. Earlier, the costs were based on the average price of each specific region. The Regions Ministry has assigned this price for the first half of 2006; it stands at RUB 13 600 for one square meter.

The second factor used in state housing certificates calculations is the social standard used for the new housing. It is set at 33 m² per person, at 42 m² for a family of two,

and at 18 m² per person for families of three or more. Personal incomes are not taken into account in the calculations.

If citizens want to be accepted into this program, they must file applications with regional authorities. The mechanism for being issued and paid a state-housing certificate is a fairly complicated one. Those who wish to receive a certificate and become program participant must file their applications by June 1 of the preceding year.

The state housing certificate serves as a state guarantee – it is approved and issued based on annual Russian government resolutions. The certificate is valid for a period of nine months. Its use is similar to that of earlier subsidies. The finances will be issued through a bank based on a purchase-sale agreement. The certificate may only be used in the region in which it was issued.

A citizen is given two months to open a bank account from the day he receives the certificate. He has nine months to browse the new homes or resale markets and obtain (but not build!) from a private individual or a legal entity: housing facilities, a room, an available apartment, an individual home, two homes, several living facilities – with the use of formal additional loans and credits. He then receives an ownership certificate for the specific housing facility, and the money will be transferred to the seller via a rouble account.

Money from the certificate may also be used to pay off loans taken out according to standard legal procedure, and other credits. These new standards allow the citizen to plan his own life and also to take out additional funds.

However financing of the state housing certificate program remains largely problematic. For example, resolution No. 865 formally allocated 5.2 billion roubles through 2010 for the issue of certificates to forced migrants. This is due to account for 5200 certificates. However 41 300 people require such certificates today. In 2006, 300 certificates were issued to forced migrants across the entire country - i.e. less than one percent of the required amount.

There is one other problem. If citizens, who are in a registration line to receive the certificate, move to another region, they lose their place.

From this, it is easy to draw the conclusion that one not should rely on state support for receiving housing accommodations.

3.2.6. Other middle-term accommodation possibilities (shelter, NGOs, church, etc.)

Practically absent.

3.2.7. Temporary shelters while awaiting long-term accommodation

Absent.

The cheapest hotels are too expensive for most budgets to live in for more than several days. Moreover hotel prices in the regions are often more expensive than those in the capital.

3.3.Livelihood - basic “survival”⁷¹

The main means of survival in Russia are through monthly wages, government benefits (pensions), and citizens' personal savings. The Federal State Statistics Service⁷² provides the following figures for 2005: income from business or commercial activity accounts for 11.6 % of all wages paid; monthly wages, including those not officially declared, account for 63.4 %; social benefits make up 12.8 %. For middle class and poor people, the monthly wage represents the basic means of subsistence. However, as a rule, salaries at state enterprises or organization may be very low, forcing people to search for second incomes and perform unqualified manual labour unrelated to their stated professions. Thus, for example, scientists, engineers and bureaucrats often leave for private business, work as drivers or do building and repair work. The pensions are very small and it is practically impossible to survive on pensions alone in the city. However in depressed regions with very high unemployment levels, pensions paid to the elderly turn into the main source of income and subsistence for young families. People primarily live off the land in rural regions. In the cities, people primarily survive on salaries. The pay, as a rule, is higher in private firms than government enterprises. However because of high income taxes (26.2 %), a part of the salary in the private sector is often paid unofficially “in an envelope.” The absence of an actual written contract makes the employee completely dependent on the employer. More recently, and particularly in the capital, the situation has gradually started to improve.

3.3.1.Employment

In November 2006, the Federal State Statistics Service published “The results of a population survey on the problems of employment”⁷³.

These surveys are conducted quarterly based on conditions in the last week of a quarter's second month - i.e. February, May, August, November.

The survey is conducted in all Russian regions on population samples and the results are extrapolated for the entire age group in question. The surveys have been conducted in Chechnya since November 2005.

Between February 2006 and November 2006, the surveys have included more than 278 000 people between the ages of 15 and 72 (0.25 % of that age group's population), including more than 70 000 people in November 2006 alone. It shows that as of the last week of November 2006, the number of economically active people between the ages of 15 and 72 including those in Chechnya was 74.2 million, or 66.2 % of the total population in that age group. This included 69.2 million people who were classified as employed, and 5.0 million people who were unemployed according to classifications used by the International Labour Organization (ILO). One should keep in mind that unofficial economic activity represents a major part of the Russian labour market. Some 10-12 million people are unofficially employed.⁷⁴

⁷¹ More information can be found on: US Social Security Administration. Office of Policy. “Social Security Programs Through the World, Russia”, 2006 / <http://www.socialsecurity.gov/policy/docs/progdesc/ssptw/2006-2007/europe/russia.html>

⁷² Russian Federation. Federal State Statistics Service, 2006 / http://www.gks.ru/wages/november_06.htm Last accessed March 2007

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

3.3.1.1. Unemployment⁷⁵

The total number of unemployed people in Russia at the end of July 2005 stood at 5,430,000 people, or 7.3 % of the economically active population, which was 0.1 % less than the previous month. The unemployment level is determined according to International Labour Organization standards, where the unemployed are people who are actively looking for work and are ready to start it immediately. The Federal Employment Service officially registers only every third unemployed person in Russia. Numerous experts believe that major hidden unemployment exists in the country because unemployment benefits are meagre and people rarely approach the employment service for work. They prefer instead to seek income in the so-called "grey" sector of the economy.

Unemployment according to age groups (percentage of total)

	Total unemployed	Including the ages of, in years:										Average age
		< 20	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59	60-72	
Both sexes	100	10,5	17,9	13,0	11,3	9,5	11,2	11,6	9,0	3,6	2,4	34,8
Men	100	10,3	19,5	12,7	11,5	9,0	11,8	10,9	8,1	4,1	2,1	34,5
Women	100	10,8	16,0	13,4	11,1	10,1	10,4	12,5	10,0	3,0	2,8	35,2

Unemployment according to education level (percentage of total)

Year 2005	Total unemployed	Including those with the education level of:						
		Higher professional education	Incomplete higher professional education	Intermediate professional education	Beginner professional education	Complete high school education	Basic general education	Beginner general, without beginner general education
Both sexes	100	10,1	2,9	18,8	18,3	32,4	16,4	1,1
Men	100	8,8	3,0	13,5	20,9	33,1	19,5	1,2
Women	100	11,5	2,9	25,0	15,2	31,5	12,8	1,0

According to Federal State Statistics Service data, 1.7 million unemployed people were registered with the Federal Employment Service at the end of November 2006. The number was lower than that in November 2005 by 62,000 people, or 3.6 %. In November 2006, the total number of unemployed among the corresponding group of people (i.e. excluding students and pensioners who are listed as unemployed) was 2.7 times higher than the number of those who were officially registered as unemployed.

A total of 1.6 million unemployed people (31.8 %) had no work experience in November 2006, and compared to November 2005, that figure was up by 3.3 %. Among the unemployed with work experience, 1.1 million people (31.9 %) had willingly resigned from work, and 1.0 million (28.1 %) were forced to leave their places of employment due to cutbacks.

⁷⁵ Russian Federation. Federal State Statistics Service data for March 2007 / http://www.gks.ru/free_doc/2006/b06_13/06-09.htm Last accessed May 2007.

The average time spent searching for employment as of November 2006 stood at 8.9 months, 0.3 months longer than in November 2005. Some 40.2 % had been unemployed for a year or longer (38.5 % in November 2005). The percentage of long-term unemployment in the agricultural sector was higher – 48.0 %, and had dropped 0.2 % compared to the previous year. Unemployment had grown by 2.4 % among people living in cities, and stood at 34.6 %.

The average age of an unemployed person was 34.1 years – that of an employed one, 39.7 years. People younger than 25 made up 31.1 % of the unemployed total and 11.2 % of the employed workforce. People of 55 and over made up 5.1 % of the unemployed figure and 10.5 % of the employed workforce.

About 11 % of the unemployed people had higher education and 17 % had an intermediate professional training. These two groups made up 25.6 % of the employed.

Among all Russian regions, the lowest unemployment levels (according to ILO methodology) were seen in the Aginsk Buryatia autonomous region, where it stood at 0.9 %. It was registered at 1.6 % in the city of Moscow and 2.4 % in St. Petersburg. It ranged between 2.7 and 5.0 % in the Karelia, Tula, Moscow, Yaroslavl, Lipetsk and Kostroma regions, and the Evensk and Chukotka autonomous regions.

The highest unemployment levels, according to ILO methodology, was observed in Chechnya and Ingushetia, where it stood at 66.9 % and 58.5 % respectively. It was registered at between 19 and 22 % in the Karachayevo-Cherkessia, Kabardino-Balkaria, Tyva and Dagestan regions.⁷⁶

3.3.1.2.Labour market programs

Practically absent.

3.3.1.3.Labour conditions

Labour conditions for most workers are fairly difficult despite the liberal norms adopted by Russia's Federal Labour Code,⁷⁷ which envisions a five-day, 40-hour work week, overtime and holiday work compensation, 28 working days vacation, and payment for days off due to illnesses, benefits for pregnant women, underage children, those attending school or university, and the disabled. However none of these laws are strictly observed for numerous reasons. The main one is the high level of unemployment and low wages paid in the state sector.

Despite the fact that the Labour Code protects workers from illegal employer practices, workers rarely work the courts to protect their rights and legal interests. Court proceedings drag out over extended periods of time and attorney costs are very high. Often a large portion of the wage is paid "in envelopes," i.e. off the accounting books, since the wage tax as calculated through the unified social tax is very high - 26.2 % of the official wage. The employer pays this sum to the government, after

⁷⁶ Russian Federation. Federal State Statistics Service, data 1995-2005/
http://www.gks.ru/free_doc/2006/b06_13/06-09.htm Last accessed March 2007

⁷⁷ Russian Federation. Russian Labour Code. December 31, 2001 No. 197-F3 (TK RF) (with amendments on July 24, 25 2002; June 30, 2003; April 27, August 22, December 29 2004, May 9, 2005).

To be consulted via <http://www.consultant.ru/dbs/prof.phtml?BOCKQ> Accessed on March 2007.

which point the employee pays 13 % as income tax. It thus becomes impossible to resolve conflicts through the courts.

Safety measures are often not properly followed. In hazardous industries, damaged plant filters are often removed without being replaced.

The minimum wage, as established by federal law, stood at RUB 1100 a month on May 1, 2006.⁷⁸ It stood at RUB 800 in September 2005 (Federal law No. 193-F3 from December 29, 2004).⁷⁹ At the same time, the minimum subsistence level in Moscow for the second quarter of 2006 stood at:

- ↪ per capita – RUB 5159
- ↪ for the working age population – RUB 5829
- ↪ for pensioners – RUB 3562
- ↪ for children – RUB 4430⁸⁰

The actual average monthly wage for Russia as a whole stood at RUB 850 in 2006.⁸¹

The Federal State Statistics Service provides the following average wage figures for the country:

In January 2007 the highest average monthly wage was earned by workers in the fuel, energy and minerals procurement sector, followed by workers in the financial sector and those in the pipeline industry. The lowest average wage was paid in the agricultural sector⁸².

3.3.1.4. Accessibility of short-term / occasional jobs

Most people who live in regions where jobs are in short supply survive on seasonal jobs at construction sites and by doing repair work on private homes, along with agricultural work. As a rule, these jobs are filled without the formal paperwork, which leaves the workers without any rights and completely dependent on their employers.

3.3.1.5. Lack (or high demand) in specific professions

Professional jobs, such as teachers, professors, doctors and computer specialists are in demand.

3.3.1.6. Practical and contact information

⁷⁸ Russian Federation. Federal law No. 198-F-3 from December 29, 2004, chapter 1.
To be consulted via <http://www.consultant.ru/dbs/prof.phtml?BOCKQ> Accessed on March 2007.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Moscow Government. Official Server / http://www.gks.ru/wages/november_06.htm Accessed on March 2007.

⁸¹ Federal State Statistics Service data. Living standards of population / http://www.gks.ru/free_doc/2006/b06_13/06-09.htm last accessed on March 2007

⁸² Ibid.

Civic Assistance Committee regularly receives such information from the Ministry of Health and Social Security. However only a tiny number of people can actually use it: it is either late or out-of-date, sometimes simply wrong, and at other times it offers unacceptable working conditions. For example, there was an advertisement stating that someone was willing to accept a family with guaranteed public housing and employment. After personally contacting the ad poster, it turned out that they were only ready to accept a single man and prepared to offer him a single bed in a dormitory.

3.3.2. Contact information relevant to the issue of recognition of degrees obtained elsewhere

The State Commission for Academic Degrees and Titles (VAK) of the Ministry of Education and Science performs the acceptance of foreign university degrees. The applicant submits the required set of documents to the VAK, at which point the commission examines the papers and determines the exact type of degree to which it corresponds in Russia.

VAK contact information:

State Commission for Academic Degrees and Titles (VAK) of the Ministry of Education and Science
Moscow, Sadovaya-Sukharevskaya street, 16
telephone number: 208-6139 and 208-6161

3.3.3. Education and retraining programs

3.3.3.1. By government

In St. Petersburg the Department for employment takes part in the state program for the retraining of the unemployed people. It cooperates with some colleges and High schools of St. Petersburg. After finishing the retraining course, people receive diplomas⁸³.

3.3.3.2. By international organizations or NGOs

International organization programs exist, but there are very few of them, and even fewer are successful.

3.3.4. Starting a new business

Business registration is possible for an individual who is registered in the given district. Many programs for organizing small businesses failed due to an absence of the required funds (no less than several thousand euros) and the malevolent attitudes of authorities.

3.3.5. Social security

⁸³ For more information, please consult: <http://rspb.ru> and <http://rspb.ru/educ/edde.html/>

BASIC SOCIAL GUARANTEES ESTABLISHED BY RUSSIAN LEGISLATION⁸⁴	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Monthly wages and pension in RUB						
Minimum wage	200.0	300.0	450.0	600.0	720.0	800.0
Base pay. 1st section of the Unified Wage Tariff System (ETS) for paying budget sphere workers (subject to supplemental payment)	200.0	450.0	450.0	600.0	720.0	800.0
Size of base pensions ¹⁾ :						
For age	153.1	450.0	522.4	598.0	660.0	954.0
For physical impairment ¹⁾						
I degree (until 2002 - III group)	102.0	225.0	261.2	299.0	330.0	477.0
II degree (until 2002 r. - II group)	153.1	450.0	522.4	598.0	660.0	954.0
III degree (until 2002 r. - I group)	306.2	900.0	1044.8	1196.1	1320.0	1908.0
In case of losing main provider:						
To children who lost both parents, or children whose single mother died (complete orphans), per child	153.1	450.0	522.4	598.0	660.0	954.0
To other disabled family members of a deceased provider, per family member	102.0	225.0	261.2	299.0	330.0	477.0
Benefits in RUB						
Single benefit payment to women who have registered with a female consultancy service in the early months of pregnancy (up to 12 weeks)	100	300	300	300	300	300
Single benefit payment for the birth of a child	1500	4500	4500	4500	6000	8000
Monthly benefit payments for the duration of parental leave, until the baby turns 1.5 years old	200	500	500	500	500	700
Monthly benefit payments until the child turns 16 years old ²⁾ :						
Per each child	70	70	70	70	70 ⁴⁾	70 ⁴⁾
Per child of a single mother	140	140	140	140	140 ⁴⁾	140 ⁴⁾
Per child of servicemen ⁵⁾ , for children whose parents are avoiding alimony payments	105	105	105	105	105 ⁴⁾	105 ⁴⁾
Social benefit payment for burial	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000
Monthly stipends in RUB						
Minimum stipend:						
For students of state and municipal colleges and universities	200	200	200	400	400	600
For current students attending institutions of middle specialty and beginner professional education	70	70	70	140	140	210

1) Until 2002 - minimum size of pension (without considering compensations).

2) Until 2002 - without taking the disabled from World War II into account.

⁸⁴ Russian Federation. Federal State Statistics Committee data, Living standards of population / www.gks.ru/ .

- 3) Per student of a learning facility - until completion of education, but for no longer than until the age of 18.
- 4) Since 2005, the benefits are established by statutory legal acts of the subjects of the Russian Federation (regions), in sizes no smaller than the stated amounts.
- 5) Drafted into military service.

3.3.5.1. Unemployment benefit and access to it

Unemployment benefits are among the guarantees provided for by the Russian Constitution.⁸⁵ The conditions for payment of such benefits are laid out in “The law on employment.”⁸⁶

According to this law, unemployment benefits are paid to citizens who are recognized as unemployed in established order (pt. 1, ch. 31 of “The law on employment”).

The unemployment benefit is either paid as a percentage of the average income the unemployed had at his last job, or as a multiple of the minimum unemployment benefit payment (pt. 1-2, ch. 30 of “The law on employment”) – depending on the reasons for which the person was left without a job.

Since January 1, 2005, the Russian federal government has established a minimum and maximum unemployment benefit payment: RUB 700 and RUB 2880.⁸⁷

Unemployment benefits may not be paid interminably. The legislation establishes limits on the period over which they are paid. These limits depend on the reason for which the person was left unemployed (pt. 4, ch. 31 of “The law on employment”).

Unemployed citizens who remain without a job at the end of the first period of unemployment benefit payments have the right to repeated payments, unless otherwise stipulated by the law (pt. 5, ch. 31 of “The law on employment”).

A decision to issue unemployment benefit payments to a citizen is reached simultaneously with his official recognition as being unemployed (pt. 2, ch. 31 of “The law on employment”).

Citizens are awarded unemployment benefits from the first day of their unemployed status (pt. 3, ch. 31 of “The law on employment”).

Unemployment benefit payments are made monthly under condition that the unemployed undergoes re-registration in the period assigned by the employment service agency, but no more than twice a month (pt. 6, ch. 31 of “The law on employment”).

Exceptions

For citizens who are laid off from an organization due to the organization’s liquidation or the reduction of its staff or the staff’s status, and who are recognized as unemployed in the established order, but who were not employed in the period for which they were being paid an average monthly wage at their last place of employment (compensated by severance pay), the unemployment benefit payment

⁸⁵ Russian Federation. Constitution of the Russian Federation, chapter 37, pt. 3.
To be consulted via <http://www.consultant.ru/dbs/prof.phtml?BOCKQ> Last accessed March 2007

⁸⁶ Russian Federation. Law on employment of the Russian Federation, August 22, 2004.
To be consulted via <http://www.consultant.ru/dbs/prof.phtml?BOCKQ> Last accessed March 2007

⁸⁷ Russian Federation. Russian government resolution No. 591 from November 4, 2004 “On the minimum and maximum unemployment benefit payments for 2005”.
To be consulted via <http://www.consultant.ru/dbs/prof.phtml?BOCKQ> Last accessed March 2007

begins on the first day following this special period (pt. 3, ch. 31 of “The law on employment.”)

For citizens who failed to reach pension age (60 years of age for men and 55 for women) and whose length of service allows them to receive pension payments (i.e. 25 years of service for men and 20 for women, or any length of service at corresponding jobs that permits them to receive early pension payments), the period during which unemployment benefits are paid is extended beyond the assigned 12 months by two calendar weeks for each year of employment that exceeds the given employment status (pt. 1, ch. 32 of “The law on employment”).

The entire period of unemployment benefit payments may not exceed 24 calendar months, cumulatively, as paid over a 36 calendar month period.

Unemployment benefit payments cease with the removal of the citizen’s unemployed status (pt. 2, ch. 35 of “The law on employment”) in cases of:

- recognition of citizen as employed;
- completion of professional training, improved qualification or retraining as assigned by the employment service agency, with payment of stipends;
- an extended (over one month) failure by the unemployed to appear at the employment service agency without a legitimate excuse;
- the unemployed person’s relocation to a different area;
- the unemployed person’s conviction resulting in loss of freedom;
- assignment of a pension;
- refusal to accept mediation from the employment service agency (by way of the citizen’s personal written statement);
- the unemployed person’s death.

A decision to terminate unemployment benefit payments is reached by the employment services agencies with mandatory notification of the unemployed (pt. 6, ch. 35 of “The law on employment”).

Halt to unemployment benefit payments

The payment of unemployment benefits may be halted for a period of up to three months in cases of (pt. 3, ch. 35 of “The law on employment”):

- refusal, during the unemployment period, to accept two suitable jobs;
- refusal to accept a paid public sector job at the end of a three-month unemployment period, or to participate in education programs assigned by the employment service agency – for citizens who are seeking their first jobs (no previous employment history) and who at the same time have no profession (qualification), for citizens who are trying to resume employment after an extended absence from work (more than one year), and for certain other citizens;
- the appearance by the unemployed for re-registration in a state of inebriation caused by the use of alcohol, drugs or other intoxicating substances (see pt. 22 of the “Instruction for registering unemployed citizens”);
- dismissal from last place of employment (service) for violation of work discipline and other wrongful acts covered by existing legislation, as well as the dismissal of an individual assigned to education courses from those courses for wrongful acts;
- violation, without proper justification, by the unemployed person of the conditions and terms for the person’s re-registration as unemployed (unemployment benefit payments are halted from the day following that of his

last appearance for re-registration) (see pt 19 of the “Instruction for registering unemployed citizens”);

- the citizen’s voluntary end of attendance at re-education courses assigned by the employment service agencies.

The period for which the unemployment benefit payments are halted is counted toward the entire period of unemployment benefit payments.

A decision to halt unemployment benefit payments is reached by the employment services agencies with mandatory notification of the unemployed (pt. 6, ch. 35 of “The law on employment”).

Unemployment benefit payments are not made (pt. 4, ch. 35 of “The law on employment) in case of:

- pregnancy and maternity leave;
- the unemployed person’s departure from his permanent place of residence due to attendance in evening schools or corresponding professional education institutions;
- the unemployed person’s enlistment in military duty, or enlistment in activities linked to preparations for military duty, or the performance of state duties.

This period is not counted toward the entire period of unemployment benefit payments, which is extended.

The amount of the unemployment benefit payment may be reduced by 25 % for a period of up to one month in case of (pt. 5, st. 35 of “The law on employment”):

- failure to appear without a legitimate excuse for talks with an employer within three days of being assigned to do so by the employment service agencies;
- failure to appear without a legitimate excuse to the employment service agency for employment (or education) assignment .

A decision to reduce unemployment benefit payments is reached by the employment services agencies with mandatory notification of the unemployed (pt. 6, ch. 35 of “The law on employment”).

It should be remembered that unemployment benefit payments are made only with the presence of registration based on place of residence. Attempts to contest this rule in court have been unsuccessful.

3.3.5.2.Sickness benefits and access to them⁸⁸

Sickness benefits are accessible only to citizens who have a health insurance policy. A health insurance policy may be obtained in a medical institution based on place of registration. The latter means that sickness benefits may only be received if one is registered.

The following are excerpts from the instruction for issuing documentation confirming a citizen’s temporary unemployed status⁸⁹:

⁸⁸ Russian Federation. Federal State Statistics Committee, Data Public Health; www.gks.ru/ Last accessed April 2007.

⁸⁹ Russian Federation Ministry of Health. Decree No. 206, October 19, 1994.

Documents confirming a person's temporary disability or confirming the person's temporary dismissal from work (studies) constitute a disability memo and, in specific cases, acceptable forms of certificates granted to citizens in case of sickness or injury for the period of their medical rehabilitation, in case of the need to leave work to attend to sick family members, a healthy or disabled child, for a period of quarantine, for pregnancy and maternity leave, and for prosthesis in case of in-patient hospitalization. With the issue of a disability memo, in accordance with corresponding laws, payments are assigned and begin for temporary disability or pregnancy and maternity leave. A disability memo (sickness list) is issued to: citizens of the Russian Federation, foreign citizens including those of the CIS states, people without citizenship, refugees and forced migrants, who are employed in businesses, organizations and institutions of the Russian Federation regardless of whether they are private or public; citizen who became disabled within one month of leaving a job for sound reasons; citizens who have been recognized as unemployed and who have registered with regional employment service agencies; former servicemen who became disabled within a month of being dismissed from emergency service in the Russian armed forces.

The right to issue disability memos (sickness lists and notes) belongs to practicing doctors in federal, municipal and private medical system institutions, based on them having a license to conduct temporary disability evaluations. Doctors issue disability memos (sickness lists) after receiving a document confirming the patient's identity. The issue and extension of a document confirming temporary disability is done by the doctor after performance of a physical examination and is confirmed by an entry in a medical journal that explains the temporary disability. The document confirming temporary disability is issued and then stopped, as a rule, in the same medical facility but, with evidence, may be extended in a different one. Citizens who are located outside their permanent place of residence receive their disability memo (sickness list) from the treating doctor, who confirms the temporary disability with permission from the medical facility's administration, taking into account the number of days required to travel to the place of permanent residence. In case of illness or injury, the treating doctor issues a disability memo (sickness list) personally and on a one-time basis for a period of up to 10 calendar days, and extends it personally for a period of up to 30 calendar days, taking into account the approximate disability period for various illnesses and injuries approved by the Russian Health Ministry.

All types of benefits are paid during the disability period of an employee according to the work contract. The illness or injury of the insured person should occur within 30 calendar days of the day the person stopped working, or from the day the contract was signed until the day it was annulled.

The size of a benefit payment for temporary disability may not exceed RUB 16 125⁹⁰. If an insured person has jobs with several employers, the size of the temporary disability benefit may not exceed the stated maximum of that type of benefit for each place of employment. A person who has been insured for less than six months receives a temporary disability benefit payment that does not exceed the monthly minimum wage (RUB 1100), while in districts and regions assigning a regional coefficient to monthly wages, one that does not exceed the minimum monthly wage multiplied by that coefficient.

3.3.5.3. Family allowances and access to them

⁹⁰ Local government of Permskaya oblast. Clarification of Russia's Social Security Fund "On the rules for assigning, calculating and paying temporary disability benefits", January 23, 2007 <http://fss.perm.ru/>
Last accessed March 2007

Not applicable.

3.3.5.4. Other benefits in the social welfare system ⁹¹

Provision of pregnancy and childbearing benefits

Since January 1, 2007, the following state maternity benefits are being paid to citizens by Russia's Social Security Fund:

- a pregnancy and childbearing benefit payment;
- a single benefit payment to women who register at a medical facility in the early stages of pregnancy;
- a single benefit paid with the birth of a child;
- monthly benefits for tending to children.

Pregnancy and childbearing benefit payment

A pregnancy and childbearing benefit is a one-off payment that is granted and paid cumulatively for the period of maternity leave during pregnancy and birth. The pregnancy and childbearing benefit is paid to an ensured woman for the entire period from pregnancy to childbirth for a period of 70 calendar days from the day of delivery (84 calendar days in case of multiple pregnancy), and 70 calendar days after delivery (86 calendar days in case of complications during delivery, 110 calendar days with the birth of two or more children). In cases of labour complications or multiple pregnancy, a new disability form is issued, extending an existing one, for the additional days of the post-delivery period. The right to pregnancy and childbearing benefits is held by:

a) women subject to mandatory social security.

Benefits for working women are awarded by the Social Security Fund depending on the place of employment. The basis for awarding a pregnancy and childbearing benefit is a disability memo that is issued according to current procedure. Pregnancy and childbearing benefits for working women are assigned at a rate of 100 % of the average wage (income) received over the 12 calendar months preceding the start of maternity leave. The average wage for calculating the pregnancy and childbearing benefit is determined by federal law No. 255-F3 from December 29, 2006 "On providing benefits for temporary disability, pregnancy and childbearing to citizens who are subject to mandatory social security," and other statutory acts concerning mandatory social security.

For women who had been insured for less than six months, pregnancy and childbearing benefits are paid an amount not exceeding the minimum full monthly wage established by federal law, with application of regional coefficients in localities where they are applicable.

The pregnancy and childbearing benefits are also assigned and paid according to the last place of employment (service) in cases where the maternity leave begins within one month of a woman leaving her job due to her husband's relocation for other employment, and her move to be with her husband; illness prevents the continuation of work or living in a given area; there is need to take care of sick family members (in the presence of a medical conclusion) or group of disabled people.

⁹¹ Local government of Permskaya oblast. Social Security Fund, January 1, 2007 / <http://fss.perm.ru/list/mother> Last accessed May 2007

b) women who were dismissed due to the liquidation of an organization, cessation by particular individuals of their business activity, termination of private notary or attorney powers, or the cessation of business activity by other private individuals whose professional work is subject to state registration and (or) licensing in accordance to corresponding federal laws - within a period of 12 months preceding the day they were recognized, according to current procedure, as unemployed.

This category of women is awarded and paid benefits in the amount of RUB 300 per calendar month (adjusted to the local coefficient, in regions where they are applicable) by social security agencies in their place of residence. In order to be eligible for pregnancy and childbearing benefits, these women must submit a corresponding application to the local social security agency, along with a disability memo, a properly notarized copy of their employment history book stating their last place of employment, a certificate from the local federal employment service agency confirming their unemployed status, a decision from the regional federal tax service agency on state registrations confirming the private individual's cessation of activities as a private entrepreneur, private notary, attorney, and the cessation by other private individuals of professional activity that is subject to state registration and (or) licensing in accordance to corresponding federal laws.

This benefit payment is drawn from the accounts of Russia's Social Security Fund.

c) women who receive residence training at lower, intermediate and higher professional training institutions and post-graduate professional training facilities.

These women receive benefit payment in the size of the stipend established by the learning facility (but no lower than the minimum stipend established by Russian law), based on a standard form medical certificate.

The pregnancy and childbearing benefit payments are made from federal budget (regional budget) funds designated for paying stipends at education facilities.

In addition, all of the above-mentioned categories of women are eligible for pregnancy and childbearing benefits in case of adoption of a child (or children) up to three months old.

In case of adoption of a child (or children) that is up to three months old, the pregnancy and childbearing benefit is paid for the period starting from the day of adoption up until the expiration of 70 calendar days (110 calendar days in case of adoption of two or more children) from the day of the child's (or children's) birth.

The assignment and payment of pregnancy and childbearing benefits to women who adopt a child that is up to three months old is done in accordance with procedures established for the above-mentioned categories of benefits.

In addition, a court certificate confirming the adoption is required for the assignment of these benefits.

The pregnancy and childbearing benefit is paid no later than 10 days from the date of submission of all required documents.

Single benefit payment to women who register at a medical facility in the early stages of pregnancy.

Women who register at a medical facility in the early stages of pregnancy (up to 12 weeks) are eligible for a single benefit payment in addition to the pregnancy and childbearing benefits.

This benefit payment in the amount of RUB 300 is assigned and paid based on the place of assignment and payment of the pregnancy and childbearing benefit. The payment is made on presentation of a certificate from a women's consultancy or other medical facility that has registered the woman in her early stages of pregnancy.

The benefit is paid in accordance with the established regional coefficient factor (based on the coefficient factor established in the Urals, the benefit payment stands at RUB 345).

The single benefit for women who register with a medical institution in the early stages of pregnancy is granted and paid together with the pregnancy and childbearing benefit if the certificate confirming registration at the medical facility is presented together with the documents for receiving pregnancy and childbearing benefits. Otherwise, it is paid no more than 10 days from the date of submission of the certificate confirming registration at the medical facility, if the said certificate is submitted at a later date.

Single benefit paid with the birth of a child

A single benefit paid with the birth of a child serves as compensation meant to cover expenses involved with the birth of a child. For this reason, the state guarantees payment of this type of benefit both to employed (i.e. insured by mandatory social security) and unemployed citizens. The right to a single benefit payment with the birth (or adoption at the age of under three months) of a child is held by one of the parents, or a stand-in person. Since January 1, 2006, the benefit payment with the birth (adoption) of a child stood at RUB 8000 (RUB 9200 based on the Urals regional coefficient). The size of the benefits payment did not change in 2007. In case of the birth of two or more children, the single benefit payment is awarded and paid for each child. The benefit is not awarded in case of the birth of a stillborn. The single benefit paid with the birth of a child is assigned and paid to one of the parents or a stand-in individual based on place of employment (service, studies). If the parent or the stand-in individual is unemployed (not in service, attending school), it is paid by the social security agency based in the child's residence.

3.3.6. Useful data to calculate the cost of living

According to federal statistics data, prices of a basic basket of goods ranged in February 2007 from RUB 1524 in the Central Federal District to RUB 2156 in the Far Eastern Federal District. A good indication of food prices may be gained from those seen in Yaroslavl in March 2007 (a city on the Volga in central Russia). A kilogram of rye bread cost between 10.50 and 13.41 roubles and of wheat bread from 17.00 to 20.40 roubles. Other rouble prices on a kilogram of goods include: various pasta 14.00-20.50, potatoes 9.00-11.74, cabbage 9.00-11.23, onions 18.00-20.00, apples 28.00-55.00, boiled sausage 86.00-120.00, beef 100-128, frozen fish 32.00-59.00. The price for a litre of milk was RUB 14.00-18.40 and 10 eggs cost RUB 22.70-28.80. The price of cheap clothing is relatively low. Utility costs and food expenses take up most of the income of families with average wages. The average price of gasoline for the country in mid March 2007 was RUB 17.71 per litre. A-76 and AI-80 class gasoline, on average, cost RUB 15.70 per litre.

3.4. Health

In the Soviet Union, healthcare services were fully paid for by the state. Medical assistance was both free and available to all, although its quality throughout the regions – from the capital to the provinces, the cities to rural districts – varied greatly. In addition, the last decades of the Soviet Union’s existence saw the common but unofficial practice of patients personally paying doctors in order to ensure better medical services. The health service in Russia underwent reforms in the early 1990s. Complementary to the direct financing from the state budget, the health system also got financial injections from insurance payments. Medical facilities were now free to offer commercial services. In practice, this led to an under-financing of state and municipal medical facilities, and their drive to offer as many services as possible on a commercial basis. As a result, citizens’ right to free medical care in state and municipal institutions, which is guaranteed by the Russian Constitution (Chapter 41), is turning into a formality. Commercial medical practices continue to expand, while free assistance is shrinking with every year. Many types of medical services are becoming unattainable for the poorer segments of the population.

3.4.1. General health situation by regions⁹²

Over the past 15 years, the death rate in Russia – especially among the working-age population – has been considerably higher than that registered not only in Western but also Eastern Europe.

The average life expectancy in Russia was 65.3 years in 2005, whereas in the Soviet era of the 1960s it had reached levels of leading Western nations (69.6 years in 1965).

The most unfortunate characteristic of the Russian death rate is the level of premature deaths among working-age Russians, predominantly men. Nearly one-third of those who died in 2005 – 740 000 people – were working-age people. Almost half (47 %) of all men who died that year were of working age.

Against the backdrop of a high but stable death rate from blood circulation problems (which account for more than half of all deaths), one observes a growing death rate among those suffering from digestive system ailments. The rate is also wavering but rising for certain infectious diseases, including tuberculosis.

One of the most significant risk factors for the growing number of circulatory system ailments is the sharp increase in the rate of arterial hypertension in Russia. Arterial hypertension has reached epidemic proportions in recent years. It is caused by growing cardiovascular risk factors – smoking, obesity, poor exercise, unbalanced diet, stress – and an absence of adequate controls over the problem due to the population’s poor familiarity with the disease and its severe consequences.

Oncological diseases occupy a second place among fatal ailments. At the end of 2005, the number of patients with malignant tumours registered in oncological treatment centres stood at 2 386 766 people, or 1.7 % of the population. An important problem remains that, despite diagnostics improvements, the ratio of patients whose tumours are detected in the early stages fails to improve. This is due to many regions’ refusal to oversee prophylactic health checkups on the population what had been the norm in the Soviet era. This fact is largely responsible for the large percentage of patients who die from oncological diseases.

Flue and respiratory infections hold dominant positions among ailments caused by infectious airborne particles. The two are responsible for 90 % of all illnesses in this group.

⁹² Health Care of the Russian Federation. “State report on human health in the Russian Federation”, Several articles published in Health care of the Russian Federation, in 2005 and 2006 / to be consulted <http://www.medlit.ru/medeng/zdr/zdr05e.htm> and <http://www.medlit.ru/medeng/zdr/zdr06e.htm> Last accessed May 2007

The epidemiological situation with viral hepatitis also remains unfavourable. There have been cases of hepatitis infections occurring in medical and prophylactic institution. Some 184 patients were infected with hepatitis B and another 62 with hepatitis C in this manner in 2005. The spread of hepatitis A among the population is promulgated by the poor quality of drinking water. Nizhny Novgorod saw the highest flare-up of this illness in 2005, with 3000 patients suffering from the disease.

Hepatitis B immunization helped reduce the number of its incidents in Russia by a factor of five.

Since its start of registration in Russia in 1994, type C hepatitis cases grew annually to a rate of 21.1 per 100 000 people in 2000. The rate began to fall in 2001, and stood at 4.5 per 100 000 in 2005. The rate exceeds the average (4.5) in St. Petersburg, the Leningrad region, Khanty-Mansiysk autonomous region, Irkutsk, Amursk, and the Moscow and Smolensk regions, where its is 1.7-3.1 times above the norm, with 7.9 to 14.2 cases per 100 000 people. It should also be noted that a very high rate of people carrying the hepatitis C virus is being observed, with 104.7 cases occurring per 100 000 people in 2005 (117.8 cases in 2004).

The epidemiological situation with tuberculosis has remained tense in recent years. The main causes for this tension are still observed today. The highest rates of tuberculosis infections in Russia are observed in the Koryak autonomous region (444.6 per 100 000), Tyva republic (250), Ust-Ordynsk Buryat autonomous region (190.1), Primorsky region (157.9), republic of Altai (146.2), Khakasiya (136.1), and Khabarovsk region (129.4).

The country has witnessed a recent stabilization of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Some 30 299 cases of HIV infection were registered in 2005 (21.1 cases per 100 000 people). A number of measures aimed at fighting the spread of the HIV epidemic have helped largely to contain it to the most vulnerable segments of the population.⁹³

3.4.3.1. Drinking water and sanitation by regions; heating systems

The vastness of Russia's territory provides for a tremendous variety of natural environments for its inhabitants. Russia has enormous supplies of water and fuel (coal, oil, gas, timber), but still lags far behind European countries in the accommodation of municipal services. In addition, there are significant differences between living conditions in cities and rural settlements. As a rule, cities have running water and sewage systems, central heating, and ensure provision of hot water and cooking gas. In rural regions, less than half the residences have running water, and fewer still have sewage systems. In most cases, heating comes from either gas or wood-burning ovens. It is rare for villages to be supplied with hot water, although most village homes now use gas, which either comes from a central system or canisters. However, there is a great number of villages in Russia whose lone sign of modern progress is electricity.

In most settlements, the water, sewage and heating systems were built in the Soviet era and have since become severely run down, leading to frequent malfunction. Over recent years, Russian media have supplied regular reports about breakdowns that leave entire cities and regions without heat; they report about illnesses and poisonings caused by malfunctions of the water purification and sewage installations. Authorities repeatedly speak about the need to undertake municipal service reforms, whose main point consist of attracting additional funding from consumers for the sector's upkeep and repair. However authorities continue delaying the launch of these reforms, since they are

⁹³ Health Care of the Russian Federation. "Based on materials of the "State report on human health in the Russian Federation", articles published in Health care of the Russian Federation, 2005 and 2006 / <http://www.medlit.ru/medeng/zdr/zdr05e.htm> and <http://www.medlit.ru/medeng/zdr/zdr06e.htm> Last accessed May 2007

worried of the negative feedback from the poorer segments of society whose interests may be hurt the most.

Housing equipped with services and utilities⁹⁴

	Housing quipped with types of services (percentage)						
	running water	sewage systems	heating	bathtubs (showers)	Gas (central, liquefied)	hot water	floor electric ovens
Entire housing sector							
1995	71	66	68	61	69	55	15
2005	76	71	80	65	70	63	17
Housing sector in cities							
1995	84	82	85	77	67	72	20
2005	88	86	91	81	68	79	23
Housing sector in rural area							
1995	35	24	23	20	73	12	2
2005	43	34	52	26	75	22	3

3.4.3. Healthcare system

Russia's healthcare system, having squandered many of the accomplishments of the Soviet era (general accessibility and free medical care), has still inherited the worst traits of the Soviet healthcare system – specifically, its bureaucratic and centralized nature. All non-commercial medical facilities are separated into three groups: 1. state medical facilities accountable to the federal government; 2. state medical facilities overseen by regional authorities; 3. municipal medical facilities overseen by municipal authorities. On his own, a citizen may only appeal for help at a municipal medical facility that services the specific medical region in which the person is registered (where he has a residence permit). In order to receive free medical assistance in state institutions a person must be either officially redirected by a municipal facility to one overseen by regional authorities, or by the region's healthcare administration to an institution accountable to the federal government. Opportunities to win placement in medical facilities responsible to the federal government are limited by the size of annual quotas issued to each specific region.

3.4.3.1. Healthcare infrastructure by regions

⁹⁴ Russian Federation. Federal State Statistics Service, data on Public health / www.gks.ru/

According to official statistics provided by the Ministry of Health and Social Development, 16 009 treatment-prophylactic facilities operated in Russia at the end of 2005, including 7854 hospitals, 1433 clinics – 1024 of which had in-patient centres – 5854 independent ambulatory and medical clinic establishments, and 887 institutions offering dental care.

In rural regions, ambulatory and obstetrician centres, as well as local and district hospitals usually offer medical assistance. Ambulatory and obstetrician centres come practically unequipped with any medical equipment. This is confirmed by the fact that the federal “Health” project in operation since 2006 aims to supply medical equipment to 12 000 ambulatory and obstetrician centres. Rural medical facilities suffer from severe staff shortages: in 2005, 16 % of ambulatory and 7 % of rural local hospitals had no staff positions filled by a certified doctor. The number of rural facilities has also been declining in recent years: 318 ambulatory and 231 local hospitals closed in 2005.

City residents receive medical treatment in district and city outpatient clinics and hospitals. In cases where rural, district and city hospitals are unable to treat a patient, they are sent to either a region’s or specific republic’s central hospital, located in the capital city of that subject of the Russian Federation.

Highly trained, technologically equipped medical service is provided to patients on direction from regional healthcare administrations, in accordance with annual quotas issued for facilities overseen by federal authorities. These are located in Moscow, St. Petersburg and several other major Russian cities. City medical facilities have better medical equipment than rural ones, but they suffer from severe shortages of modern medical technologies. This is even true for Defence Ministry facilities.

Emergency medical assistance (in cases of accidents, injuries, poisonings and other conditions and illnesses) is provided by the ambulance service. In 2005, 3276 ambulance stations operated in Russia. Thirteen percent of patients in rural areas received help from ambulance services that year.

According to an Accounts Chamber report prepared in 2002, the country’s medical facilities’ specialized equipment needs are being fulfilled by just 30-40 %. Eighty percent of the existing equipment has been in service for 15 to 20 years, and has been physically worn down and otherwise aged. The average wear of medical equipment for 49 Russian regions surveyed stood at 61.8 %, and was more than 80 % in some regions. Even in some leading medical scientific centres, equipment wear was recorded at 30 to 80 %.

Medical and prophylactic facilities are also inadequately supplied with high-tech diagnostics equipment. Thus, there is one MRI system for every 5-6 million Russians, and one computerized tomographic system for one to 2-3 million people. In Western countries, these ratios stand at 1:500-600 000 people and 1:200-300 000 people, respectively. About a quarter of Russia’s regions do not have such equipment at all, which is reflected in their levels of diagnostics and treatment, including in cases of oncological diseases.⁹⁵

3.4.3.2. Eligibility criteria and access to healthcare services

⁹⁵ Ibid.

Russia's Constitution and the "Legislative principles of the Russian Federation on citizens healthcare" guarantee free medical care to Russian citizens in state and municipal medical facilities, within the frameworks of the government's annually published program for state guarantees for providing free medical assistance to Russian citizens. However, in practice, receiving free medical assistance in municipal facilities hinges on the patient being registered based on place of residence in the specific municipality and subject of the Russian federation (region). In case of absence of such registration, free medical assistance may only be provided with special consent (directive) of the regional healthcare administration. At the same time, the presence of registration also does not prevent patients from having to pay, in one form or another, for medical assistance in state and municipal medical facilities – especially in cases of surgeries that require hospitalization.

In St. Petersburg one can receive adequate medical care if one has a provisional registration. If someone is in possession of a health insurance almost all medical examinations are paid⁹⁶.

3.4.3.3. Costs of healthcare

The Russian government annually approves a "Program of state guarantees for providing Russian citizens with free medical assistance" that, in part, earmarks financial spending on this assistance. The program for 2007 sets the following spending allotments for medical organizations to provide citizens with free medical assistance:

- a) an average of RUB 116,9 per one visit to an ambulatory or prophylactic organization, and RUB 238,3 per one patient-day in such a facility
- b) an average of RUB 238,3 per one hospital bed-day of in-patient treatment
- c) RUB 1064 per one ambulance dispatch call

These norms "take into account expenses for wages, additional labour remunerations, supply of medicaments and bandages, food, soft stock, medical instruments, reagents and chemicals, glass, lab dishes and other material supplies, as well as payment for laboratory and instrument tests performed at other facilities (in the absence of own laboratory and diagnostic equipment), and payment for the organization of the supply of food to the facility (in case of absence of own kitchens)."⁹⁷

The costs of medical services at private institutions vary greatly: they are higher in medical scientific research institutes than in capital city hospitals. They are higher in Moscow and St. Petersburg than in the provinces. For example, doctor consultations in a Moscow medical centre cost between 500 and 1000 roubles, an electrocardiogram costs between 400 and 500 roubles, and an X-ray of each section of the spine between 500 and 800 roubles. These prices are two to three times lower in the North Caucasus. In-patient treatment costs depend on the level of the clinic and the type of treatment performed. Surgery in a major scientific centre on average costs each patient about USD 3000-5000. Some operations are far more expensive, although they rarely exceed USD 10 000.

⁹⁶ Interview of The House of Peace and Non-Violence (telephone +7 921 951 03 45, e-mail peace@mail.wplus.net) with Mrs Bela Vilenskaya, St Petersburg, May 2007

⁹⁷ Russian Federation. Russian government resolution No. 885, December 30, 2006 / To be consulted via <http://www.consultant.ru/dbs/prof.phtml?BOCKQ> Last accessed May 2007

In case of some illnesses, the required medication is so expensive that it becomes unaffordable in case of long-term use for even the most well-off patients. This is the case with leucosis, haemophilia, collagen disease, disseminated sclerosis, kidney transplant convalescence, and some others. Medications used to treat the most common cardiovascular diseases are significantly cheaper. But for the elderly, who most frequently suffer from these diseases, payment for medicines (if not received for free) can take from one third to a half of their only wage - pensions.

3.4.3.4.Discrimination in healthcare system

The main and almost only form of discrimination in healthcare comes in the form of the abovementioned access restrictions to free medical assistance for citizens who lack registration based on place of residence. The widespread existence of xenophobia in Russian society leads to patients with roots in the Caucasus, Central Asia, or those with dark skin sometimes encountering ill-natured treatment from medical personnel. However this does not provide sufficient grounds to speak of discrimination based on ethnic or racial grounds in the Russian healthcare system. One may also view the inability for large segments of Russian society to access the highly qualified, modern medical treatments administered in central clinics, as well as to obtain expensive medications, as a certain form of social discrimination.

3.4.3.5.Services of non-state agents in healthcare

Numerous international, foreign and nongovernmental NGOs operate in Russia's healthcare system. Foreign and international NGOs mostly provide assistance to medical facilities in the form of medication and equipment supplies. Some of them organize and finance direct free medical assistance to groups of citizens that have no access to free state care. For example, the French organization Doctors Without Borders (Médecins Sans Frontières) for a number of years supported a sanitation and first aid centre for Moscow's homeless – it operated until the Moscow city government set up such a centre with city budget funds. Several international and foreign humanitarian organizations provided (and some still continue to provide) first aid in Ingushetia – in camps and places of temporary residence set up for refugees (IDPs) from Chechnya and forced migrants from North Ossetia.

Russian NGOs concentrate more on providing individual support for patients and their families. For example, a charity group working with the Russian Children's Clinical Hospital collects donations for expensive medication and medical treatments performed on children who are being treated in oncohematology departments. Since the end of 2003, the Civic Assistance Committee, in cooperation with Caritas France, has been providing care to patients from Chechnya, which is being financed by the European Commission.

3.4.3.6.Diseases which cannot be effectively treated in the country

The methodology used in Russia to treat most ailments corresponds to that used by international patient treatment programs. Russia's lag in treating some illnesses (oncological, endocrinological, immune system deficiencies, haemophilia, disseminated sclerosis, and others) is attributed to medical facilities' poor stock of modern medications and medical equipment. In addition, due to low wages paid to medical personnel, in-house treatment centres cannot provide the necessary care for

patients (including patients' post-surgery rehabilitation), which leads to a reduce effectiveness of the provided treatment.

3.4.3.7. Supply with standard medicines

The offer of free medical assistance by state and municipal in-patient centres also stipulates free supplies of medicines used during treatment. However most provincial hospitals are not stocked with required medicines, and patients or their families are forced to obtain them on their own. Federal medical centres also often lack required medicines – especially modern, highly effective and expensive ones. Moscow city hospitals have the best medicinal supplies.

In accordance to the law “On state social assistance,”⁹⁸ the right to free medicine and ambulatory treatment is guaranteed to World War II veterans, those who saw combat duty, and the disabled (chapter 6.1). The Ministry of Health and Social Development approves the list of medications provided to these patients for free. However this list does not include all of the required medicines. In addition, provincial hospitals that provide free medicine for these patients often lack medicines included in this list – especially the most expensive medicines that are most difficult for patients to obtain on their own. As a result, most patients who suffer from serious ailments are unable to obtain the required medications for free. For example, no more than 10 % of Russia's 150 000 patients suffering from disseminated sclerosis receive free medicine. This occurs while even the briefest lapses in treatment with the required drugs lead to death.⁹⁹

The realization of the right to free medicine, as well as to free medical assistance, is conditional on the presence of registration based on place of residence. A patient who does not have registration based on place of residence in the location in which he lives may not receive even vital medicines without special permission from the regional healthcare administration. As the Civic Assistance Committee's experiences in defending the rights of such patients, regional healthcare administrations are very reluctant to issue permission for non-registered patients to obtain free medicine.

⁹⁸ Russian Federation. Federal law N° 195, “On state social assistance”, November 25, 2006.
To be consulted via <http://www.consultant.ru/dbs/prof.phtml?BOCKQ> Last accessed April 2007

⁹⁹ A. Gorbachyova, “Fatal Lapse”, in: Nezavisimaya Gazeta newspaper, March 30, 2007.

ANNEX 1**HRC “Memorial” Counselling Points**

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