



## Russia

Last update:	3 January 2012
Author:	
Population:	138,739,892 (July 2011 est.)
Prime minister:	Vladimir Putin (since May 2008)
President:	Dmitriy Medvedev (since May 2008)
Governemental type:	Federation
Ruling coalition:	One ruling party – United Russia
Last election:	Parliamentary 4 December, 2011
Next election:	Presidential 4 March, 2012
Sister parties:	A Just Russia party (consultative member status agreed by the SI Council, to be ratified at the next Congress)

The parliamentary elections on the 4th of December 2011 deprived the ruling United Russia party of its constitutional majority in the legislation. This has provoked the world media to question Vladimir Putin's victory in the presidential elections of 2012. At the same time, tens of thousands of Russians have initiated protests in Moscow calling for the election to be re-run and claiming that the votes were rigged in favour of the ruling United Russia party. Critics say the unrest is a credible show against Prime Minister Vladimir Putin. Further developments in the country will show whether Russia will speed up its democratic transformation, or if the following months will be just difficult time in the country's foreign policy.

### INTRODUCTION

Russia was hit hard as a consequence of the global financial crisis of 2008 because it mainly relies on revenues coming from energy exports. It made the Russian government instantly aware of the risks of an undiversified economy.

In 2008 the Russian Constitution was adjusted: the next President can remain in this position for six years. In the same year Putin became Chairman of the ruling party United Russia, which he seems to use as legitimisation of his prolonged leadership.

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### ELECTIONS AND POLITICAL SITUATION

After the break-up of the Soviet Union the Russian Federation gained independence on 24 August 1991. The country is a federal democratic republic with a strong presidential system. Currently, the people elect the president for a four-year term, but an amendment to the Constitution prolongs the term to six years as from 2012. Former president Vladimir Putin, who served as president from 2000–2008, was succeeded by Dmitry Medvedev, his appointed successor. The Federal Assembly has two chambers: the State Duma (Lower House) has 450 members, elected for a four-year term by proportional representation. This term has been extended to five years in 2011. The Federation Council (Upper House) has 166 members, two delegates for each of the 83 regions.



#### Political environment and the Putin election decree

During the Putin-era, pressure on democracy and human rights in Russia has been increasing. Besides its increased wealth and political status in the world, Russia has also shown an increased level of human rights violations, repression of opposition parties and organisations, and an increased pressure on independent media. Opposition parties experience increasing difficulties in finding ways to get out their message: the media is increasingly dominated by the state and opposition parties and organisations have difficulties to organise protests and rally's. These problems are worsened by the new election law, which is in use since 2007. Important changes to the previous law include stipulations that voters are no longer allowed to cast their ballots against all candidates, and the increase of the election threshold for political parties from 5% to 7% of the vote to win seats in parliament. Another difficulty for smaller political parties is the legal minimum number of 50,000 members a party should have to compete in the elections. In July 2007, the Russian Communist Workers Party – Revolutionary Party of Communists challenged this law in court on the ground that the legislation illegally limits a citizen to participate in political life. However, the Constitutional Court ruled in favour of the legislation. The immense personal power that is wielded by the president can also be seen in the 2008 presidential elections, in which Dmitry Medvedev, hailed by Putin as his favourite candidate, won an easy victory in the polls. He competed in the elections with the promise not to change the line of policy Putin has set out, and to appoint Putin as his prime minister.

On 24 September 2011 Dmitry Medvedev endorsed Prime Minister Vladimir Putin for the upcoming presidential elections of 2012. Putin accepted the nomination. In turn he had asked Medvedev to head the ruling party's list for the December 4 Duma elections. Under amendments to the constitution made in 2008 the presidential term was extended to six years, meaning Putin could stay in power for another 12 years, until 2024.

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#### Presidential elections 2 March 2008

Presidential elections took place in Russia on 2 March 2008. In the elections. Outgoing president Vladimir Putin had already served for 2 consecutive terms, and was by law prohibited from running in the elections. He would, however, firmly influence the elections by on 10 December 2007 endorsing Dmitry Medvedev as his favourite candidate, and 7 days later announcing his intention to serve as prime minister under his former protégé, before the official campaign had even started.

#### Candidates

Four candidates competed in the elections. Although several opposition parties and blocks had also announced their intention to put forward presidential candidates, eventually they were all blocked from participating in the elections. Boris Nemtsov, nominated by the Union of Rightist Forces (SPS) could not enter the ballot because the SPS is no longer represented in parliament. Yabloko, which also failed to gain representation during the December 2007 elections, did not officially nominate anyone, but announced to support the candidacy of Soviet-era dissident Bukovsky, who was refused participation in the presidential ballot due to official residency requirements, as he has lived abroad for many years. Garry Kasparov, leading the opposition umbrella movement 'Other Russia', announced on 13 December that he would not run in the elections, alleging the Russian authorities were frustrating his efforts to be registered as a candidate.

The final four candidates, which were announced on 27 January, all covertly supported the Kremlin. These were deputy prime minister and Putin's personal choice Dmitry Medvedev, supported by United Russia, A Just Russia, the Agrarian Party and Civil Force; Communist Party leader Gennady Zyuganov, nationalist Liberal Democratic Party leader Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, and the relatively unknown Democratic Party leader Andrei Bogdanov, who was alleged to be running as a puppet candidate of the Kremlin, running as an 'opposition candidate' in order to make the elections appear more 'free and fair'. In all forecasts, Bogdanov consistently polled below 1 percent of the votes.

#### Outcome of the elections:

Dmitry Medvedev



Gennady Zyuganov
Vladimir Zhirinovskiy
Andrei Bogdanov

Voter turnout: 69 percent

After elected Dmitry Medvedev pledged to continue the policies of Putin.

#### International election monitors

On 6 February 2008, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) decided not to monitor the Russian presidential elections of 2 March as, according to the OSCE, the Kremlin continued to impose too many restrictions to make any monitoring of the vote meaningful. The OSCE had earlier also abstained from monitoring the 2 December 2007 parliamentary vote.

A delegation of 25 members of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) monitored the election and concluded that “the election repeated most of the flaws revealed during the parliamentary election in December 2007.” It also said that “equal access of the candidates to the media and the public sphere in general did not improve, putting into question the fairness of the election.”

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#### Parliamentary elections 4 December 2011

On 4 December, Parliamentary elections were held in Russia. The official turnout was 60,1% (63.7% in 2007).

The results:

Duma elections 4 December 2011
United Russia
Communist Party (CPRF)
A Just Russia
Liberal Democratic Party



Yabloko
Patriots of Russia
Right Cause
Total:

The ruling United Russia party gained 49.32% of the votes, which indicates a decrease in support in comparison with the 2007 elections, where the party won 64,1% of the votes. However, it still means that the party has secured the majority of seats in the parliament. The Communist Party of the Russian Federation (CPRF) received 19.19% of the counted votes (11,6% in 2007), A Just Russia – 13.24% (7,8% in 2007), and the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia (LDPR) – 11.67% (8,2% in 2007).

The other three parties that participated in the elections – Yabloko, the Patriots of Russia, and the Right Cause will not be represented in the parliament, as they did not make the 7% minimum threshold. As Yabloko has won more than 3% of the votes, it gets the right to receive financial support from the state.

The preliminary results mean that the United Russia party loses the constitutional majority that it had after the results of the previous election. The United Russia party already announced that it will negotiate with the opposition to form a coalition in the parliament.

‘Compensatory’ mandates were to granted to those parties who would receive from 5% to 7% of votes (the threshold is 7%), but none of those parties who did not enter the parliament, overcame the barrier of 5%.

#### Campaigning

The election law requires that each political party should have a minimum of 50.000 members and more than 45 regional branches with a minimum membership of 500 each. Only seven political parties managed to obtain registration for participation in the parliamentary elections.

According to the interim election report of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), a low level of campaigning and alleged violations during the campaigning process were observed. The report notified that the level of campaigning was low until the first big rallies on 4 November conducted by the United Russia party and Liberal Democratic Party (LDPR) in Moscow and St. Petersburg, and a couple of days later by the Communist Party of Russia (KPRF). The report also pointed out that some parties voiced concern about the governing party ‘making use of administrative recourses’ during electoral campaigning. One such case was the filmed attempt of the Head of the Izhevsk city administration (Republic of Udmurtia) to influence voter choices by promising bonuses to veterans if they would vote for the governing party. Earlier, Russia’s election authority, the Central Election Commission, accused the ODIHR of applying double standards and politicizing the election process.

#### Alleged violations



The observers from the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly (PACE) and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) reported 'frequent procedural violations and instances of apparent manipulation, including serious indications of ballot box stuffing'.

Opposition parties complained of breaches of electoral law and Russia's only independent monitoring group, Golos, was knocked down in a massive cyber attack as were the sites of a half of dozen independent-minded media, including the internet version of the newspaper 'Kommersant' and radio 'Echo of Moscow'. Golos said it has logged 5,300 complaints alleging violations, particularly voter intimidation and the harassment of election observers. According to the Russian internet portal, Russian journalists, voters and observers have recorded a gigantic quantity of violations and 'mass fraud', including multiple carousel voting and ballot box stuffing.

#### International reaction

U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton suggested Russia's elections were neither free nor fair, adding that 'Russian voters deserve a full investigation of electoral fraud and manipulation'.

The European Parliament issued a resolution asking for a re-run of the elections, to which Dmitry Medvedev responded that 'this is our [Russia's] election and the European Parliament has nothing to do with it', adding that the European Parliament's decisions mean nothing to him.

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## POLITICAL PARTIES

The Russian Federation is a democracy in name, but many observers doubt its democratic potential. One of the main reasons is the lack of an independent multi-party system. The State Duma is dominated by United Russia, the power party of Vladimir Putin. After the parliamentary election of 2007 they occupied 315 out of 450 seats. The preliminary results of the 2011 elections indicate that the United Russia will now control 238 out of 450 seats, and in order to renew its domination will have to look for possibilities for a coalition.

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## SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTIES

A Just Russia Party (Fair Russia)  
Status at Socialist International: Consultative Party.

A Just Russia, also translated as 'Fair Russia', was created in 2007 when three political organisations merged together: Rodina (Motherland), the Russian Pensioners' Party and the Russian Party of Life. The party is led by Sergey Mironov, who is the chairman of the Federation Council of Russia. A Just Russia is a leftist social democratic party and sees itself as the alternative to United Russia. In the 2007 regional elections the party came third after United Russia and the CPRF with an average vote of 15%. In the 2010 regional elections they received the same average amount of votes. A Just Russia is expected to hold 64 seats in the next Russian parliament after elections held in December 2011.

A Just Russia proclaims its political philosophy as 'New Socialism'. Its central value, they argue, is 'the individual'. The role of the state is to attend to the individual's needs. Despite their critique of Soviet style communism, they do not openly criticise the Soviet past. Part of their electorate has positive reminiscences of the Soviet-Union and A Just Russia does not exclude cooperation with the CPRF in the near future. One of A Just Russia's political aims is to create a broad leftist movement to compete with the rightist party of power, United Russia. Opponents of A Just Russia criticise the party for only being an opposition party in name, but not when it comes to practice.



The party is upgraded from observer member status in the Socialist International, which was agreed by the Council and has to be ratified at the next Congress.

Leader: Sergey Mironov

Other social democratic oriented parties, such as the Social Democratic Party of the Russian Federation of Sergei Beloserzev or the Social Democratic Union of Vassili Lipitsky, were not re-registered after the law of 2001.

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## OTHER POLITICAL PARTIES

Parties represented in State Duma

United Russia

United Russia is the largest political party in contemporary Russia and is considered to be the 'party of power'. Since 15 April 2008, Prime Minister Vladimir Putin is the chairman of the party. United Russia was founded in April 2001 when the parties Fatherland – All Russia, led by Moscow Mayor Yuri Luzhkov, and the Unity Party of Russia merged.

In 2003 the party published its political manifesto called 'The Path of National Success'. United Russia is a conservative party who's goal is to unite political forces and support the Russian President in order to enhance national unity. They reject the classical concept of left-wing and right-wing politics as they depart from a static notion of political centrism. United Russia supports a mixed economy in which a free market is combined with state regulation. Economic benefits should be redistributed for the most part to the poorest people.

The party claims to have 2,01 million members (2010) and will likely occupy 238 out of 450 seats in the State Duma after the December 2011 elections, which does not give it a constitutional majority. The results indicate that the party started to lose its popularity.

Leader: Vladimir Putin

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Communist Party of the Russian Federation

The Communist Party of the Russian Federation (CPRF) is the biggest political party after United Russia and it is the most influential opposition party in the Russian Federation. The CPRF might be considered as a successor to the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) but differs in many respects. Its leader, Gennady Zyuganov, co-founded the party in 1993 together with other senior Soviet politicians.

The CPRF, as it is formed by Zyuganov, is popular-patriotic in character. It is not a strict communist party, as it no longer prohibits religion and opts for a mixed economy. Its main characteristics are the demand for a strong state, economic equality for the citizens of Russia and social justice for all. It targets the wealth of the new class of oligarchs. Therefore, the CPRF is especially popular with pensioners, industrial workers and non-profit organisations' employees.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Communist Party was prohibited for a while in Russia, because of its attempt to overthrow Gorbachev in August 1991. In 1992 a court ruling allowed the party to return to the political scene. Several former Soviet Communists started new communist parties in Russia, but only Zyuganov's CPRF managed to become a successful organisation. In 1996 Gennady Zyuganov entered the first presidential elections and competed against Boris Yeltsin. He finished second with 32% of the votes. Yeltsin won with 35%. During Putin's presidency Zyuganov was less popular, but still a political force to reckon with.

Zyuganov stood as candidate for the presidential elections in 2008. He received 17,76% of the votes and did not have a chance against Dmitry Medvedev's popularity, who collected 70,23% of the electoral votes. The CPRF was more successful in the last regional and legislative elections. Following the preliminary results of the legislative elections on the 4th of December 2011, the CPRF will likely hold 64 in the next parliament, which is an increase in



comparison with the 2007 elections, after which the party held 57 seats in the parliament.

Leader: Gennady Zyuganov

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#### Liberal Democratic Party of Russia

The Liberal Democratic Party of Russia (LDPR) was founded in 1989 by Vladimir Zhirinovskiy as the second official party in the Soviet Union. It fulfilled the role of being an opposition party, but according to former CPSU politburo member Alexander Yakovlev the LDPR was created by KGB director Vladimir Kryuchkov as puppet party to control the opposition. In the West, the LDPR is known most for its leader, Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, who created a personality-cult which absorbs all the party's attention and time. Zhirinovskiy is Vice-Chairman of the State Duma.

The party's ideology is one of extreme nationalism with imperialistic aspirations, and inclined to strong, even fascist, authoritarian beliefs. The methods it uses, both in and outside the Duma, are highly populist which accounts for the party's ambiguity over economic questions. The LDPR draws most of its support from the marginalised populations of the provinces who have suffered most from transition and reform. Notwithstanding its oppositional stance, in almost all cases, the LDPR votes in favour of the Russian President.

Following the preliminary results of the legislative elections of the 4th of December 2011, the LDPR will likely hold 56 seats in the State Duma, that is an increase in comparison with the 2007 elections, after which the party held 40 seats in the parliament.

Leader: Vladimir Zhirinovskiy

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#### Non-parliamentary Parties

##### Yabloko

The Russian United Democratic Party Yabloko was formed in 1993 by Grigory Yavlinskiy, Yuri Boldyrev and Vladimir Lukin. Yabloko means 'apple' and is an acronym of the founders names. From the beginning in 1993 till 2008 Yavlinskiy was the party leader. In 2001 he was succeeded by Moscow City Duma deputy, Sergey Mitrokhin.

Yabloko is a social liberal political party. In the beginning of the nineties they were fierce adherents of greater freedom and civil liberties in Russia, as well as the introduction of a free market economy. Since the Russian presidency became more authoritarian during Putin's regime they have warned for the deterioration of democracy in Russia. Yabloko has felt the consequences of Putin's 'managed democracy' as well. In 1995 it reached its peak with 45 seats in the State Duma. According to the preliminary results of the 2011 parliamentary elections, Yabloko only received 3,3% of votes which means the party will not be represented in the State Duma.

This decrease in political power also has to do with the lack of popularity of liberal ideas in Russia and internal conflicts within Yabloko. Criticism on Yavlinskiy grew within the party after Yabloko failed to gain representation in the Duma in the latest parliamentary elections in 2003 and 2007. After the failed elections of December 2007 (1,7% of the votes), there were increasing calls for his resignation. Yavlinskiy was succeeded in June 2008 as party leader by Sergey Mitrochin, leader of the Moscow branch of Yabloko. With the election of Mitrokhin, Yabloko seems to have chosen for the moderate wing of the party as opposed to the more radical wing, which is led, amongst others, by Yabloko St Petersburg leader Maksim Reznik.

Yabloko is a member of the Liberal International.

Leader: Sergey Mitrokhin

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#### Right Cause

Right Cause was formed in February 2009 following a merge of three political parties: the Union of Right Forces (SPS), Civilian Power and the Democratic Party of Russia. The party has a liberal conservative stance and presents itself as an opposition party. Critics say that the party is effectively under Kremlin control. The party is led by Georgiy Bovt, Boris Titov and Leonid Gozman, former leader of the Union of Right Forces.

Right Cause aimed at winning seats at Russia's parliamentary elections in 2011 under the slogan: "Freedom, property, order.", but, according to the preliminary results, received only 0,59 % of the votes.

Leaders: Georgiy Bovt, Boris Titov and Leonid Gozman

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#### Patriots of Russia

Patriots of Russia was established in 2005 as a left wing nationalist and socialist party. Its founder, Gennady Semigin, was expelled from the Communist Party of the Russian Federation after a power struggle with Gennady Zyuganov. In 2006 the party joined the Rodina faction for a short while until Rodina decided to merge with other parties in A Just Russia. The 'patriots of Russia' decided to run for the 2011 legislative elections as a separate party (as they did in 2007). They won 0.97% of total votes and did not secure any seats in the State Duma.

Leader: Gennady Semigin

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#### Non-registered political parties

##### People's Freedom Party (PARNAS)

The People's Freedom Party (for Russia without lawlessness and corruption) was founded in December 2010 by opposition politicians: Republican Party chairman Vladimir Ryzhkov, chairman of the People's Democratic Union Mikhail Kasyanov, one of the prominent leaders of the 'Solidarnost' movement Boris Nemtsov, and leader of the movement 'Democratic Choice, Vladimir Milov. The party was formed on the basis of a coalition of four organizations of its co-founders. At the founding conference of the party Kasyanov, Milov, Nemtsov and Ryzhkov were elected co-chairmen of the party, which the media called PARNAS. In September 2011 Kasyanov, Nemtsov and Ryzhkov were re-elected as co-chairmen of the party.

The party is strongly critical of Putin's regime. Its stated goal is to return Russia to the path of democracy and restore respect for the Constitution.

In June 2011 PARNAS was denied registration. The Justice Ministry said the party's petition had dozens of false names and contradictions in its statutes. PARNAS called the decision political, but in any case lost any chance of participating in the December 2011 elections. The party decided to continue its activity and start preparing for the presidential elections (spring 2012).

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#### The Other Russia

The Other Russia is a broad organisation connecting several political parties and NGO's that are united as an opposition movement. The Other Russia was formed during a constitutional meeting in July 2006. The movement represents itself as a "national platform" and does not run for elections.

Its task is to "restore civil control of power in Russia, a control that is guaranteed in the Russian Constitution that is so frequently and unambiguously violated today. This aim requires a return to the principles of federalism and the separation of powers. It calls for the restoration of the social function of the state with regional self-administration and the independence of the media. The judicial system must protect every citizen equally, especially from the dangerous impulses of the representatives of power. It is our duty to free the country from outbreaks of prejudice, racism, and xenophobia and from the looting of our national riches by government officials."



The Other Russia is particularly known for the organisation of several 'Marches of the Discontented' in large Russian cities. The first one took place in Moscow on 16 December 2006 and was led by Garry Kasparov, former World Chess Champion, and other opposition leaders. These protests were some of the largest Russia has seen in recent years. The demonstrations took place before the presidential elections of 2008. The coverage in Russian media was very negative and biased. The marches still continue on the 31st day of the month. This date carries a special meaning since they protest against violation of Article 31. Article 31 of the Russian Constitution states that Russian citizens have the right to assemble, a right that is contested by the Russian government in multiple ways. During these demonstrations many activists are regularly arrested, like Eduard Limonov, leader of the National Bolshevik Party, who was jailed on several occasions.

Leaders: multiple of which Garry Kasparov is the best known figure.

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## BIOGRAPHIES

Dmitry Anatolyevich Medvedev  
President of the Russian Federation

Dmitry Medvedev was born on 14 September, 1965, in Leningrad. He graduated from the Faculty of Law at the Leningrad State University in 1987 and completed his post-graduate studies at the Leningrad State University in 1990. Medvedev holds a PhD in law and the title of associate professor.

Between 1990 and 1999 Medvedev was a lecturer at the St Petersburg State University. Simultaneously, he was an adviser to the Chairman of the Leningrad City Council and an expert consultant to the St Petersburg City Hall's Committee for External Affairs between 1990 and 1995. In 1999, he was named Deputy Government Chief of Staff of the Presidential Executive Office. In 2000, his position was up-graded to the First Deputy of Staff.

Between 2000 and 2001 Medvedev was the Chairman of the Board of Directors of OAO Gazprom. In October he was appointed Chief of Staff of the Presidential Executive Office. Two years later, in November, he was appointed First Deputy Prime Minister.

On 17 December 2007, Medvedev was endorsed by the ruling United Russia party as a candidate in the presidential elections in 2008. On 2 March, 2008, Medvedev was elected President of Russia, succeeding Vladimir Putin. According to final election results, Medvedev won 70.28% of the votes.

Medvedev is married and has one son.

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Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin  
Prime Minister of Russia

Vladimir Putin was born in Leningrad on 7 October 1952. He graduated in 1975 with a degree in law from the Leningrad State University. In 1997 he earned a PhD in economics for his thesis on "Strategic Planning of Regional Raw Material Operations in a Market Economy". After his graduation in 1975 Putin started working for the KGB. He was stationed in East-Germany from 1985 to 1990.

Upon his return to Leningrad he became assistant to the rector of Leningrad State University at the department of International Affairs. Next he became an advisor to the chairman of the Leningrad City Council. He soon made career within the St Petersburg city council as chairman of the St Petersburg City Council's International Relations Committee in 1991. From 1994 he started working as First Deputy Mayor of St Petersburg.



In 1996 he started working as a state official with the national government. In May 1998, he was promoted to first deputy head of the Presidential Administration and two months later, he became head of the Federal Security Service. In March 1999 Putin also started working as Secretary of the Security Council. In August 1999 he was appointed Prime Minister by Boris Yeltsin.

On 31 December 1999 Putin became acting President of the Russian Federation and on 26 March 2000 he was officially elected with 53% of the votes. After his popular first term as president he was elected for his second term in March 2004. After two presidential terms Putin had to resign, because a Russian president cannot serve three terms in a row. Therefore Putin appointed Dmitry Medvedev in 2008 as his successor and became Prime Minister again himself.

Vladimir Putin is married to Lyudmila Putina and they have two daughters.

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Sergey Mikhailovich Mironov  
Speaker of the Federation Council and leader of 'A Just Russia' party

Sergey Mironov was born in Pushkin, near Leningrad on 14 February 1953. Between 1971 and 1973 he served in the Soviet Army. In 1980 he graduated from the Leningrad Mining Institute, in 1992 from the St Petersburg State Technical University, in 1997 with honours from the Academy of State Service at the President of the Russian Federation and in 1998 with honours from the St Petersburg State University. He is trained in technical, economic and legal education.

Between 1978 and 1986 Mironov worked as engineer-geophysicist in several places. After a brief time of working as an engineer he entered politics and in 1994 he was elected deputy of the St Petersburg Legislative Assembly. In 2001 he entered the Federation Council of Russia as representative of St Petersburg. Since 2001 he is Speaker of the Federation Council.

Since April 2003 he was Chairman of the Russian Party of Life. A political party that does not exist anymore. In October 2006 he became the leader of the new center-left opposition party 'A Just Russia'. Mironov was candidate in the 2004 presidential election but said he supported Putin. He received less than 1% of the votes. Mironov is a supporter of the extension of the length and increased amount of consecutive presidential terms. He made it clear that he hopes Vladimir Putin will return as president in 2012.

Sergey Mironov is married to Lyubov Ivanovna. He has two children.

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Boris Jefimovitsj Nemtsov  
Former Deputy Prime Minister of Russia and co-founder of the Union of Right Forces

Boris Nemtsov was born on 9 October 1959 in Sochi. He studied physics at Gorky State University from 1976 to 1981 and specialised in radio physics. In 1985 he received his PhD in physics and mathematics. His political career started in 1989 when he unsuccessfully ran for the Soviet Congress of People's Deputies. He campaigned for private property rights and free speech while criticising the Soviet one-party system and censorship. He failed to obtain the approval of the selection committee, which was required to put his name on the ballot paper.

His career took off when he became the representative of the Gorky Region (Nizhny Novgorod) in the Supreme Soviet in 1990. Here he met Boris Yeltsin, who made him his Governor to Nizhny Novgorod when he became President of Russia. Nemtsov was appointed Deputy Prime Minister of the Russian Federation in 1997. His responsibilities included social issues, housing and control of industrial monopolies. Nemtsov also served as Minister for Fuel and Energy. In 1998 Nemtsov took responsibility for financial and economic issues.

In 1999 the coalition Union of Right Forces (SPS) was created and Nemtsov was the leader of this party from 2000 to



2003. This liberal organisation was a proponent of free market reform, privatisation and democratisation. As leader of SPS Nemtsov was a fierce opponent of Vladimir Putin and warned for the fading of individual liberties and press freedom. In the 2003 parliamentary elections SPS received only 4% of votes and Nemtsov resigned as leader. In 2008 the Union of Right Forces merged with other parties and formed a new liberal democratic party called Right Cause.

From 2005 to 2006 Nemtsov worked as political advisor to the former President of Ukraine, Viktor Yushchenko. In 2008 Boris Nemtsov and Garry Kasparov created the political opposition movement 'Solidarity' in the hope of uniting the various opposition parties in Russia. In 2009 Nemtsov tried, unsuccessfully, to become Sochi's new mayor.

Boris Nemtsov is married and has four children.

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Sergei Sergeyevich Mitrokhin  
Leader of the Yabloko Party

Sergei Mitrokhin was born on 20 May 1963 in Moscow. He graduated in 1985 from Lenin's Moscow State Pedagogical Institute. Between 1990 and 1993 he followed a post-graduate course at the Institute of Sociology of the Russian Academy of Science. In 2001 Mitrokhin became a Candidate of Political Sciences. He defended his dissertation on the "Political Analysis of the Process of Formation of Federal Relations in Russia"

In 1993 Sergei Mitrokhin took part in the founding of Yabloko and received a seat as deputy in the State Duma. He worked as representative for ten years until Yabloko lost all her seats in the 2003 parliamentary elections. After that, Mitrokhin started working for the Center of Economic and Political Studies.

In 2005 Mitrokhin headed a joint coalition of Yabloko and the Union of Right Forces (SPS) to take part in the Moscow City Duma elections. They won 3 seats. In 2006 Mitrokhin became the chairman of the Moscow branch of Yabloko. Two years later, in June 2008, Mitrokhin was elected party leader of Yabloko after the departure of Yavlinsky. He received 60% of the votes.

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Garry Kimovich Kasparov  
Leader of "The Other Russia"

Garry Kasparov was born in Baku, Azerbaijan, on April 13, 1963. He started playing chess when he was five years old and his talent was discovered quite early. At the age of thirteen he became Russia's youth chess champion. In 1980 he became youth world champion and in 1981 he was the youngest chess champion of the Soviet Union.

Kasparov became a world champion in 1985 and he retained that position until 2000. He quitted his career in chess in 2005, and instead, started a new career in Russian politics. In 2004, Garry Kasparov was elected Co-Chairman of the All Russia Civil Congress and in 2006, he became Chairman of the United Civil Front Of Russia. These and other political and human rights leaders came together under the coalition banner of The Other Russia, which organises pro-democracy rallies nationwide. Garry Kasparov is one of The Other Russia's leading figures. In the West he is a symbol for criticism and opposition against Vladimir Putin, but in Russia his popularity is low.