



## RUSSIA REFORM MONITOR

The American Foreign Policy Council's Review of  
Russian Government Actions and U.S. Policy

# Russia Reform Monitor: No. 2088

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**Related Categories:** Russia

### August 5:

A new bill introduced in Russia's lower house of parliament, the State Duma, would effectively decriminalize domestic assault, according to an expose in *The Moscow Times*. The bill in question was proposed in response to a recent amendment to the Criminal Code that places domestic abuse on the same level as hate crimes, which are investigated and prosecuted by the state, and has the effect of reducing penalties for incidents of domestic abuse and violence. "Battery carried out toward family members should be an administrative offense," explains Yelena Mizulina, the lawmaker who put forth the proposed legal amendment. "You don't want people to be imprisoned for two years and labeled a criminal for the rest of their lives for a slap."

[Editor's Note: While a whopping 40 percent of all violent crimes in Russia are committed by family members, the country remains one of the few in the world that has yet to adopt a domestic violence law.]

Is Dmitry Medvedev in political trouble? The Russian premier's popularity has historically trailed far behind that of President Vladimir Putin, but his inability to address the concerns of average Russians over falling wages has pushed citizens to action. According to *Politico*, an online petition calling for Medvedev's resignation has received over 178,000 signatories after he suggested that teachers who want higher pay should have gone into a different profession. His statement exacerbated an already sore spot among the Russian working class, which has been hardest hit by the country's failing economy.

### August 6:

The Russian-backed "president" of Ukraine's Luhansk region, has been seriously injured after an assassination attempt, Reuters reports. Rebels in the breakaway region of eastern Ukraine have pinned the blame for the attack on a Ukrainian death squad. Authorities in Kyiv, for their part, believe that the attempted killing was the result of an internal power struggle in the separatist province. The attack has created an opening in Luhansk's leadership, and some believe Russia plans to fill the void with a politician from the former government of pro-Russian premier Viktor Yanukovich.

### August 7:

Workers on Russian President Vladimir Putin's pet project - a land bridge connecting the Russian mainland to the Crimean Peninsula - are reporting abusive working conditions. According to *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, workers were promised meals and lodging, but upon arrival were told expenses would come out of their salaries. One laborer has said that working on the project is "like being a slave," with no breaks during eleven hour shifts. Corruption is also rife; an estimated two-thirds of the money allocated for the project by the Russian state is currently unaccounted for, drawing parallels to similar complaints from construction sites for the 2014 Sochi Olympics, which were riddled with corruption.

### August 8:

Russia's military is preparing to launch a new generation of spy satellites, reports *The Daily Beast*. The new Hrazdan satellites would significantly improve the quality of pictures taken from space, which are vital for military operations and which Moscow heavily relies on for long distance deployments.