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## LOOKING BACK

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18+







Russia's food exports in 2015 were worth more than the country earned from arms sales.

72M tons

Russia's  
estimated 2016  
wheat harvest

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# Wheat Kings

By Howard Amos newsreporter@imedia.ru

In the agricultural heartlands of southern and central Russia, the harvest is almost in — and it's a bumper crop.

A mild winter and a warm, wet summer mean Russia looks set to see its largest wheat harvest ever and retain its crown as the world's top wheat exporter.

Russia's performance this year "shattered" its record, the U.S. Agricultural Department said in an Aug. 12 report. According to U.S. estimates, the Russian wheat harvest will likely come in at 72 million tons.

Good weather, a weaker ruble and financial investors lured by the opportunity of big returns have boosted crop-growing in Russia, which enjoys the world's fourth largest acreage of arable land. Exports have bounced back from a low point in 2010. Then, a drought triggered a Russian export ban, which in turn fueled bread riots in Egypt and the uprisings of the so-called Arab Spring.

The total grain harvest in Russia this year is predicted to reach about 115 million tons, according to figures by the Moscow-based SovEcon agriculture consultancy. Of this, 41 million tons are expected to be exported.

The favorable weather conditions and the record crop yield have not gone unnoticed by Russian officials, including President Vladimir Putin, who have made photo-op visits to farms in the throes of the harvest.

The large crop underlines an agricultural recovery Russia has undergone since the fall of communism. Mismanagement meant that the Soviet Union became an importer of grain in the 1970s and, famously, was forced to buy from the United States. Soviet dependence on imports lasted about 30 years until the collapse of Russia's meat and dairy industries in the 1990s destroyed domestic demand for feed grain.



Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev said on Aug. 15 that this year's grain harvest was likely to see "a simply outstanding result." Russia is predicted to export 31 million tons of grain in 2016.

Tsarist Russia was the world's top wheat exporter and modern Russia has finally regained that crown. Last year, Russia pushed the United States off the top spot to become the biggest global wheat exporter, with 25.5 million tons shipped abroad.

Russia looks set to continue its dominance. Traditional wheat-exporting rivals in Europe, particularly France, have suffered from poor weather this year, while U.S. wheat is becoming less competitive on global markets. Russia is expected to export more wheat in 2016 than all European Union countries combined.

Other countries in the region, particularly Kazakhstan and Ukraine, have also enjoyed record harvests. Much of the area's wheat is exported to the Middle East.

The Russian agricultural boom, in addition to a Kremlin push for food self-sufficiency, has made the sector one of the only profitable and expanding parts of Russia's struggling economy.

## Ploughing Profit

"Demand for land in Russia has jumped sharply in the last 1½ years," says SovEcon's Andrei Sizov, adding that investment in agriculture is down.

Some estimate that Russia has more than 40 million hectares of unused land — an area about the size of Iraq — land that could be suitable for arable farming.

The most fertile areas are in the country's center and south, as well as Siberia. Russia's winter wheat crop, which is planted the previous fall, is grown in central and southern regions.

The spring wheat crop, much of which has yet to be harvested, is grown around the Volga, in the Urals and southern Siberia. Russian

farmland has become one of the country's most attractive investments in recent years, popular among both the country's tycoons and large financial holdings.

Relatively low prices drive demand. Sizov estimates that land prices in the central Black Earth region, one of the country's best crop-growing areas, are between \$600 and \$700 per hectare. This compares to about \$5,000 a hectare for similar quality land in the EU states of Bulgaria or Romania.

The rush for land appears to have exacerbated social tensions in some agricultural regions. On Aug. 21, about 200 farmers from the rich southern Krasnodar region, angered by alleged illegal land seizures, launched a tractor protest convoy that planned to drive to Moscow and raise concerns with the Kremlin.

Most participants were reportedly detained by riot police on Aug. 23 outside the city of Rostov-on-Don, having completed less than a quarter of the planned 1,400-kilometer journey. **TMT**



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*"Her appointment is the best news I've had about the ministry in years."* **Alexander Shchipkov**, Orthodox Church spokesman.

**2.7/5**

Livanov's popularity score in VTsIOM poll



Livanov in 2012 publicly opposed a bill banning the adoption of Russian children by U.S. citizens. At the time, a United Russia deputy retaliated by calling Livanov "unfit for his job."

**93**

Number of religious-themed articles written by Vasilyeva



ARTYOM GEODAKYAN / TASS

The appointment of Olga Vasilyeva as Education Minister was met with protest in liberal circles, but some academics have expressed hope that she will break from the unpopular reforms of her predecessor.

# Faithful Minister

By **Eva Hartog** e.hartog@imedia.ru | Twitter: @EvaHartog

Russia's new education chief is deeply religious and has a reputation for praising Stalin.

For Olga Vasilyeva, it wasn't the breadlines and high crime rates that made early post-Soviet life a daily trial. It was the public reassessment of the country's recent, and bloodied, history.

"To blacken the past, to remove from the social consciousness the value of tradition, pride for the greatness of one's country, culture and language [was the goal]," she told an audience of teenagers at a seminar on patriotism in late June.

"Astonishing myths" abounded in the 1990s, she said, as she singled out the *Ogonyok* news magazine that was symbolic of the glasnost era. "If you look at the number of deaths and those repressed [under Soviet rule] cited in *Ogonyok*, it becomes completely unclear who was left alive at all!" she added, hinting that the figures were greatly exaggerated.

Statements such as these have alarmed some Russians after Vasilyeva, a woman in her 50s with cropped blonde hair and gold-rimmed glasses, was installed as education and science minister on Aug. 19.

While some in the academic community expect her appointment to usher in a new era of dialogue, critics stumble over Vasilyeva's allegedly positive references to Soviet dictator Josef Stalin and her ties to the Russian Orthodox Church.

Is the blend of religious conservatism and patriotism that has accompanied President Vladimir Putin's third term in power about to come knocking at schools' doors? they ask.

Moscow history teacher Tamara Eidelman thinks it might. "Vasilyeva's appointment is a sign of the general atmosphere in the country toward faux patriotism and Stalinism," she says. "And that, sadly, will of course also impact schools."

## Throwing a Bone to Voters

The removal of Vasilyeva's predecessor, Dmitry Livanov, did not come as a surprise: There have been calls for his resignation for almost as long as he was education minister.

Appointed in 2012, Livanov made few friends by pushing through far-reaching reform to reduce state dependence and improve efficiency in education. Among his most controversial moves was an overhaul of the Russian Academy of Sciences by merging research institutes and cutting funding. He also introduced a unified state exam.

It gained him the reputation of an uncompromising technocrat and made him widely unpopular with a sector accustomed to Soviet-era support.

In popularity surveys, Livanov has consistently placed near the bottom. A recent survey of government ministers by the state-run VTsIOM pollster ranked Livanov the Kremlin's most unpopular staff member, with his lowest score in years.

With parliamentary elections on Sept. 18, Livanov's sacking fits a tradition of throwing a bone to voters by purging unpopular government officials. Compared to Livanov, Vasilyeva is "a new leaf," head of VTsIOM Valery Fyodorov told the *Vesti* news program.

Russia's academic elite embraced the news. "We hope that reform from now on will be more balanced, rational," Vladimir Fortov, the head of the Russian Academy of Sciences, told the state-run RIA Novosti agency.

The Kremlin has presented the choice of Vasilyeva as inspired by gender equality issues. "I would propose appointing a woman," a serene Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev told Putin in a staged meeting broadcast on state television.

More likely, however, is that Vasilyeva's history, not her gender, snagged Russia's first female education minister the job.

## Lucky Meeting

Vasilyeva, who declined a request for comment for this article, grew up in a Russian Orthodox household in the 1960s. It was a time when "any information on a baptism, christening, religious wedding or funeral was passed on to the executive committee," she told the religious *Pravoslavie.ru* website in an interview.

"Nevertheless, my father, who had a certain position, wanted his children to be baptized," she said. After graduating early at the age of 14, she studied choir directing and later history, going into teaching and then academia.

As a prominent religious scholar, Vasilyeva focused on the relationship between the state and the Russian Orthodox Church in the 20th century, publishing more than 90 papers on the topic. At a religious seminar, she met then-Archimandrite Tikhon Shevkunov, a Russian Orthodox priest rumored to be Putin's spiritual adviser. Many believe that relationship has played a crucial role in her dealings with the Kremlin.

Her ties to the church are such that upon her appointment, Patriarch Kirill, the head of Russian Orthodoxy, congratulated her in a statement on the church's official website. "The Lord has generously endowed you with talent, which you have successfully made use of in the many stages of your service," it said.

Those links have alienated Kremlin critics such as Alexei Venediktov, editor-in-chief of the *Ekho Moskvy* radio station, who promptly announced his resignation from a ministry advisory body. "She believes the church should be close to schools, and the state to the church," he said. "Nothing good can come of this appointment."

Others argue Vasilyeva's views on history, not her religious zeal, are more cause for concern.

In a closed lecture given to Kremlin officials in 2013, Vasilyeva

reportedly praised Stalin for uniting the country on the eve of World War II, according to an unnamed source cited by the *Komsomol'skaya Pravda* newspaper at the time.

Reports of ambiguous statements on Stalin abound and, upon her appointment as minister, Russian liberal media have rehashed them to decry her political leanings. Vasilyeva's supporters have dismissed the allegations as based on misquotations and defend her public statements on Stalin as historical appraisals based on fact, rather than value judgments.

Less unequivocal is Vasilyeva's championing of patriotic values. Previously, Vasilyeva was deputy head of the presidential administration's "social projects" body, tasked with advising the government on issues of patriotism. The group was overseen by Vyacheslav Volodin, the deputy head of the presidential administration and brain behind domestic policy.

In her work in the presidential administration, Vasilyeva played a key role in preparing new teaching material on the subject of Russian history and literature. There, she took a firm line, according to a source who had crossover with Vasilyeva at the time and asked to remain anonymous. "She very sharply, almost rudely, tried to push through a line of ideology on the one hand, while reducing plurality on the other," says the source. "She sees history as the study of truth, rather than an ideological debate."

Her appointment, the source adds, is the result of a tug-of-war within the Kremlin. "When faced with an opportunity to put his own person in the position, Volodin went for it," the source says. "Medvedev was presented a done conclusion."

## Cause for Alarm?

So far, Vasilyeva has given little away about her plans as minister, saying only that Livanov's reforms will be "reviewed." In her first public appearance, she said her main priority as minister would be to defend the interests of teachers.

"Their position, their state, society's attitude toward them," she told a teachers' conference, dressed in a black gown with long sleeves — not unlike those worn by Orthodox priests.

Former student Katya Bolotovskaya enthusiastically remembers Vasilyeva's lively music and history lessons at a Moscow school in the late 1980s. "She was a wonderful teacher, better than all the others," she says. Bolotovskaya could never have predicted that her teacher would one day become the country's education minister, but, now, more than excitement, she feels alarm.

"It scares me that the education minister would have such pro-church, pro-government values," says Bolotovskaya.

Moscow history teacher Eidelman believes it's too soon to tell. "It would be premature to judge her on her words," she says. "But, to be honest, her words inspire fear." **TMT**





*"FSB employees tried to detain suspects on the federal wanted list."*  
**Vladimir Markin**, Investigative Committee spokesman.

**The Moscow Times**  
 No. 5769

4

alleged Islamic extremists were killed in the FSB raid.

220

suspected terrorists remain under "operational observation" within Russia.



According to the Investigative Committee, terror suspects were wanted for alleged involvement in illegal militant action in the North Caucasus region.



# Cat and Mouse

By **Ivan Chesnokov** newsreporter@imedia.ru | Illustration by **Katerina Lobanova**

Residents of sleepy St. Petersburg suburbia left bewildered as anti-terrorist operation targets Islamic militants.

**A**nna and Larissa, sisters in their 30s, have lived in the same apartment their whole lives. The women live on the 11th floor of a typical Soviet apartment block, on a typical street, and in the middle of a typical workers' suburb in St. Petersburg. Life there has always been predictable, if not outright boring.

On the morning of Aug. 17, the sisters were surprised when FSB agents rang their doorbell.

"We are conducting a special operation today to neutralize criminals in the apartment below yours, and we might need your apartment," one of the men told them, before telling the women to wait in a nearby school.

Three hours later, residents reported that FSB officers had set up a grenade launcher on the sisters' balcony, where their cat often perched, and fired it into apartment number 614 on the floor below. The agents then stormed the apartment.

According to Russia's Investigative Committee, the apartment had been home to four Islamic militants from Kabardino-Balkaria (KBR), a region in Russia's North Caucasus region. The men were allegedly associates of extremist Khizir Likhov, 25, a KBR native on the Russian wanted list since 2014. Just three days earlier, security forces in Kabardino-Balkaria had killed Likhov in a nighttime shootout on the Caucasus highway.

After FSB agents made the links back to his associates in St. Petersburg, the preparations for a special operation began. A day before the sisters received the knock on their door, ambulances were moved near the building, and riot police units were relocated to the area.

The next morning, when the operation was in full swing, Ivan, 40, a resident in the same building, woke up to the sound of an explosion. His young son thought it was thunder, but Ivan saw nothing but blue sky. It was only when he took his son to play in the sandbox outside that he saw men in balaclavas surrounding the building.

"Is this a drill?" Ivan asked one of them. "No, this is for real," the masked man answered.

The next explosions and gunshots were heard a few hours later, at 11:20 a.m., when FSB officers in the sisters' apartment broke through the floorboards to toss a gas grenade at the militants.

By this time, a television crew had arrived, and had apparently obstructed the operation. To get rid of the television crew, the

FSB carried a supposedly wounded officer out of the stairwell on a stretcher and loaded him into an ambulance. The journalists drove off behind them in pursuit.

Four men were killed that day: Zelim Shebzukhov, Astemir Sheriyev, Vyacheslav Nyrov and a fourth man whose name was not released. They had resided in St. Petersburg for six months and, according to the FSB, had been involved in several terrorist attacks and assassination attempts against policemen and prosecutors.

Shebzukhov had the highest profile of the four men. The 29-year-old was a well known militant in the North Caucasus and a key contender to become the new leader of the underground terrorist organization that calls itself the Caucasus Emirate. Dokku Umarov, the last president of the self-proclaimed Chechen Republic of Ichkeria and the man who claimed responsibility for the 2011 attack on Domodedovo Airport, headed the Emirate from 2007 to 2014.

## The Islamic Underground

The years of Umarov's leadership marked the height of the Caucasus Emirate's standoff with Russian security services. But after losing its third leader in just two years, the Emirate can no longer pose the serious threat it once did.

A concerted anti-terrorism campaign that began before the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi has driven many of its fighters into hiding. A large number have splintered to join the Islamic State (IS) in Syria.

Much of the Emirate's activity is now uncoordinated and driven by online propaganda, suggests Russian Middle East expert Yuri Barmin: "When the group conducts operations, they are more individual attacks that don't follow any particular strategy."

IS has also stepped up its rhetoric against Russia, but it remains similarly small in number within Russia, says Joanna Paraszczuk, a London-based expert on extremism in the Caucasus. "It's hard for IS to recruit in the North Caucasus and the Russian security services keep taking them out," she says.

At the same time, IS has thrived on social networking services like Telegram, and is quick to claim responsibility for lone wolf attacks within Russia. The group claimed to be behind an Aug. 17 attack on a road police station outside Moscow that

injured two officers, one of them critically. Both militants involved in the attack were killed.

That incident has sharpened concerns over the threat posed by Islamic terrorists, whether North Caucasus militants currently fighting in Syria or those hiding within Russia.

At a conference in late July, FSB chief Alexander Bortnikov claimed his agency was monitoring the activities of 260 Russian nationals abroad. The FSB suspects they are "actively preparing to transfer their operations to Russia and other countries," Bortnikov said. He added that 220 suspected terrorists remain under "operational observation" within Russia.

## Aftermath

Whether or not the St. Petersburg suspects were operating under clear orders from either IS or Caucasus Emirate, their presence certainly left a grim mark. The day after the FSB stormed the St. Petersburg building, sandbags, a broken elevator and blood-spattered floors served as a stark reminder of the operation. Some residents posted these images on Instagram. Bloodied plastic shoe covers, gloves and cotton swabs littered the 10th floor.

Soon, the mess was cleaned up. All that remains now is a feeling of shock. On the 11th floor, the sisters were comforted by their parents, who flew in from Finland to look after their terrified daughters. Their father, Vladimir, learned that militants were living in his daughters' building while watching a television news report in Finland, where he works.

Anna points to the damage on the balcony, where the grenade launcher was placed. Her sister Larissa refused to return to the apartment after the raid. The family cat did not return home for two days and has been reportedly walking about shell shocked.

Downstairs, a 90-year-old resident sits in the yard outside the building. The pensioner says she witnessed the entire operation. When asked why she thought Islamic militants were living in her building, she responds "because they're too lazy to work," before launching into a tirade against migrants from Central Asia. **TMT**

*\*Disclaimer: Islamic State, Caucasus Emirates are terror organizations banned in Russia*

*Additional reporting by Ola Cichowlas and Matt Bodner*





"Iran's eastern orientation, firstly toward Russia ... [is] the country's strategic choice." **Ali Larijani**, Iranian Parliamentary speaker.

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Trade volume between Russia and Iran in 2015.



In April 2015, President Vladimir Putin lifted a ban on the potential sale of S-300 air defense systems to Iran.

**2,704**

Estimated civilian casualties caused by Russian air strikes in Syria.

# Rebel Love Affair

Ever closer alignment between Russian and Iranian hardliners is sending a defiant message to the West.



Op-Ed by **David Patrikarakos**  
Author of "Nuclear Iran: The Birth of an Atomic State"

Of all today's political bromances, perhaps the most interesting is between Russian President Vladimir Putin and Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

Russia and Iran have enjoyed strong economic links since 1991, when Moscow agreed to build Iran's nuclear reactor at Bushehr. Russia badly needed the cash; Iran badly needed the expertise: It was the perfect match.

This relationship eventually translated into greater diplomatic ties in the early 2000s as Russia, together with China, repeatedly watered down UN sanctions on Iran over its nuclear program.

Relations appear to have grown even closer. Last week, Russian Tupolev-22M3 bombers and Sukhoi-34 fighter-bombers conducted air strikes in Syria from Iran's Nojeh Airbase in Hamadan, in Western Iran. Major arms deals for the sale to Iran of Sukhoi fighter jets were also mooted in the days following.

All of these developments may herald a new Russian strategy in its fight against Syria. While the Russian military claimed all operations from Nojeh were complete, the possibility of future cooperation was very clearly left on the table. "Further use of the Hamadan airbase in the Islamic Republic of Iran by the Russian Air Forces will be carried out ... depending on the prevailing circumstances in Syria," Russian Defense Ministry spokesman, Major General Igor Konashenkov said, according to pan-Arabic news channel Al Arabiya.

The importance of this deepening relationship cannot be understated. It has far-flung consequences not only for Rus-



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Iranian hardliners view helping Russia as the perfect counter to renewed relations with the West.

sia and Iran, but for the United States and Syria's civil war.

As far as the Iranians are concerned, its foreign policy must be viewed, as ever, in terms of the perennial domestic struggle between hardliners and those more moderately inclined.

The latest moves are not without controversy in Tehran's political elites. "The current Iranian government headed by [President Hasan] Rouhani as well as reformists are actually suspicious of the Russians and would prefer that Iran balances its relations with the West," explains Meir Javedanfar, Iran lecturer at the IDC Herzliya in Israel. "But the hardliners support such relations with the Russians, seeing America as their biggest enemy and Russia as an important counterbalance against the United States."

In the eyes of Iranian hardliners, helping Russia in Syria is a perfect way to counter Rouhani's efforts to repair relations with the West. In addition, it offers a possible quid pro quo of poten-

tial Russian military support in places such as Iraq and Yemen, as well as Syria. For Moscow, having a base in Iran rather than southern Russia is a no-brainer: Being that much closer to their targets, Russian planes can increase their payloads: they will drop more bombs; more damage will be wrought; more people will die. And for Iran: If Russia kills more anti-Assad forces, fewer Iranian soldiers have to die doing the same thing.

As ever, with both countries, issues of legality surround the whole affair. At the same time, as Javedanfar observes, those Russians already under sanctions are unlikely to want to risk further sanctions, and will have at least thought out a game plan. "As far as they are concerned, they either see such a move as legal at best or, in a worst case scenario, if their move was deemed illegal, they can use their veto at the UN Security Council," he says.

As far as Washington is concerned, the move ostensibly harms its position of backing the anti-Assad pro-democracy rebels — however small a minority they are. But by now U.S. President Barack Obama's policy on Syria, and indeed his entire foreign policy outlook, is clear. As far as he is concerned, Syria is the definition of a quagmire. If the Russians and the Iranians want to expend both billions of dollars and heavy casualties for a war with no end in sight, then let them have at it. Both will be weakened as a result. Both will suffer the effects of being bogged down in an intractable Middle East war. If the Russians and Iranians want Syria to become their Iraq, they are welcome to it. Better them than the United States, which has spent at least \$4 trillion in Iraq and Afghanistan.

In the words of Javedanfar: "If the Russians and the Iranian regime think that with more bombs and closer military cooperation they can indefinitely keep a leader in power who has bombed, gassed, starved and tortured to death 200,000 of his people, they are delusional. Let's see how many bombs, dead people in Syria and billions of dollars it will take them to find this out." **TMT**

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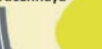


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*"All women need to be cut, so that there will be no fornication on Earth."* **Ismail Berdiyev**, mufti of Karachayevo-Cherkessia.

4

types of FGM have been registered by the UN.

&gt;200M

girls and women have undergone genital mutilation worldwide.



It is still unclear whether the ritual is outlined in Islam or not. In African countries it is practiced in communities of different religious beliefs.



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# 'It Would Be Good If All Women Were Cut'

By **Daria Litvinova** [d.litvinova@imedia.ru](mailto:d.litvinova@imedia.ru) | Twitter: @dashalitinovv

As a picture of female genital mutilation emerges from villages in Russia's southern republic of Dagestan, officials promise action.

The stories these women tell send shivers down the spine. They were only children when their mothers took them to see the older women. These women cut off part of their clitoris, sometimes all of it, sometimes together with the labia, using a regular knife or scissors. There were no sterilized instruments, nor anesthesia; instead, there was pain, blood, the risk of infection and severe psychological trauma.

Without the procedure, their relatives said they wouldn't be proper Muslims. Everyone in the community does it, and you also need it to become a decent woman that a man will marry. It will protect you from fornicating, both before and after marriage, and will stop you from living in sin if you never marry by killing "woman's frenzy," otherwise known as sexual desire.

Female genital mutilation (FGM), a dangerous ritual aimed at diminishing women's sexuality, is traditionally associated with African countries. But the practice also exists in Russia.

On Aug. 15, the Moscow-based nongovernmental organization Russian Justice Initiative (RJI) released a report revealing that FGM is a common practice in several remote mountain villages in Dagestan, one of the Russia's troubled North Caucasus republics. Several years in the making, the report is the first research conducted on female genital mutilation (FGM) in Russia. Its findings are shocking: the document suggests that tens of thousands of women residing in these villages may have undergone the procedure. This has sparked a wide range of reactions across Russian society.

Ismail Berdiyev, a mufti in the neighboring Karachayevo-Cherkessia region, told journalists that FGM is necessary to "suppress women's energy," and that it "would be good if all women were cut, so that there would be no fornication on Earth." Maria Baronova, an opposition politician running for a seat in the State Duma, picketed a mosque in Moscow with a sign that read: "Slaughter sheep, not women." Diana Gurtskaya, a singer and member of the Civic Chamber, filed a request to the Prosecutor General's Office to launch a probe into the practice. But presidential human rights council member Maxim Shevchenko called the RJI report "a deeply inappropriate hoax" perpetrated by liberal political forces in order to destabilize the situation in Dagestan.

Outraged by the report, Russian officials, both publicly and in conversations with human rights activists, acknowledged the problem and promised to deal with it. But, several days later, the dust has begun to settle and other issues are replacing FGM on the country's agenda. Activists are optimistic, but expect little immediate effect.

## Ethnic Tradition

Hundreds of girls and women in remote mountain villages of Dagestan undergo the procedure every year, and thousands more have probably undergone it in the past. But a lack of serious studies on the subject make more accurate estimates impossible, says Yulia Antonova, coordinator of the research and a lawyer at RJI.

Antonova and her research partner, Dagestani political scien-

tist and ethnographer Saida Sirazhudinova, have been advocating for women's rights in the North Caucasus region for years, but only recently stumbled upon the issue of FGM.

"When I first heard about it in 2012, I was totally shocked," says Sirazhudinova. "I started asking around, and was surprised to find out that many women I know actually went through it."

Antonova discovered FGM later, while conducting seminars for Dagestani women facing abuse and domestic violence. "At some point two years ago, several women mentioned that they went through this in the past," she says. "They were not complaining — instead, they talked about it like an ordinary fact of their lives. When asked about specifics, however, the women shut down and refused to talk about it. Clearly, the topic itself was a strict taboo for them. So we knew that it was happening, but had no idea where, how and to how many women."

Sirazhudinova began her study in 2013, soon joining forces with RJI. The researchers interviewed 25 women from small mountain villages who underwent FGM and dozens of experts — doctors, imams, ethnographers. The practice, they found, was most common in ethnic Avar communities in eastern Dagestan.

Out of several types of FGM, ranging from a small incision on the clitoris to the full removal of the clitoris along with the labia, the Dagestani communities mostly resorted to one variety: making an incision on the clitoris and letting out blood in a practice akin to an initiation ritual.

*Continued on Page 11 →*



# Out & About



August 25 – 31, 2016

7

Weekly round-up of all that's new, delicious and fun in Moscow.



SHELL YES



Shell Yes has a no frills approach to both its interior and menu. The dishes available depend on what is fresh on the day, while the interior is modern and minimalist.

## Say Yes to Shell Yes

By **Andrei Muchnik** artsreporter@imedia.ru

*Enjoy the catch of the day at this new eatery on the Boulevard Ring*

Located just a short walk from Trubnaya metro station, Shell Yes is tucked behind a monastery on the corner of Rozhdestvensky Bulvar and Maly Kiselny Pereulok. Established by Lera Golovanova, a graduate of Ragout culinary school, Shell Yes celebrates freshness and flavor with an emphasis on simple seafood fare.

With only a dozen or so tables, booking in advance is a must. Even if you find yourself sitting at the bar, all is not lost: you can inspect the fresh produce, all chilling on ice, before you order and observe the cooks at work in the open kitchen.

Despite being a relative newcomer to the

scene, the Shell Yes is often packed out, which unfortunately means the service can be rather slow and perfunctory. Let's hope that these teething pains improve over the coming months.

The design is straightforward, with marble table tops and original plaster on the ceiling.

As you may have guessed, fish is the dish of the day here. Shell Yes have a policy of serving only the freshest offerings from the watery deep. As such, if you come at the wrong time of day or the wrong day of the week you may find your options rather limited. At our sitting both the dorado (750 rubles) and trout (650 rubles) were unavailable.

At the entrance to the restaurant, fish like the yellowfin dorado (350 rubles for 100 grams) and red snapper (350 rubles for 100 grams) are displayed on huge mounds of ice. There's no garnish, but you can order tomato salad with soft cheese (600 rubles) as a side. The more adventurous can try something from the raw food menu, such as the tuna tartar (750 rubles) or the Argentinian-inspired scallop ceviche.

Feeling decadent? Many visitors opt for oysters, of which there are two varieties: the New Zealand oysters cost between 250 to 350 rubles, depending on their size, while their Mediterranean counterparts are 500 rubles each. The

grilled octopus with baby new potatoes is excellent, if a little pricey at 1,000 rubles for a rather small portion. If you're looking for something more filling, try the pasta vongole with mussels (600 rubles) or the seafood pasta (750 rubles).

The dessert menu includes the pie of the day, tiramisu and a creamy panna cotta, all for 350 rubles. While Shell Yes does not have an alcohol license, you can drink your own wine if you pay a corkage fee of 500 rubles. **TMT**

**+7 (495) 621 2735**

facebook.com/shellseafoodbar  
10/7 Rozhdestvensky Bulvar  
Metro Trubnaya

### NEWS & OPENINGS



AURA

#### Aura

##### Pan-Asian at Avtozavodskaya

Aura is worth a visit if you find yourself around Avtozavodskaya, a rather trendy neighborhood since the opening of the ZIL cultural center. Start with the wonton soup (350 rubles), then continue with tender chicken curry (590 rubles) or the rich spinach palak paneer (450 rubles). Pair your meal with a fragrant masala tea (340 rubles).

**+7 (495) 803 3615**

aurarest.su  
26 Leninskaya Sloboda  
Metro Avtozavodskaya



GET JERRY

#### Get Jerry

##### Beer and burger fix in the center

Get Jerry has the feel of a dive bar that scrubs up well. The staff are friendly, the decor is modern and the menu has some of the cheapest bites you're going to get for such a central location—special mention to the dirty cheeseburger (320 rubles). Beer is the star of the show, with countless varieties from both home and abroad.

facebook.com/pages/Get-Jerry/1189626481079319?

4 Strastnoi Bulvar, Bldg. 4  
Metro Pushkinskaya, Chekhovskaya



LOCAL PEOPLE

#### Local People

##### Grown-up dining in a stylish interior

Searching for delicious European food and an upmarket atmosphere? Local People offers all the classics with a couple of surprising twists. Tuck into the hummus served with bruschetta or the crab cake garnished with green apple chutney. With a 20 percent discount if you eat before 5 p.m., it's the perfect spot for a leisurely lunch.

**+7 (495) 662 6458**

localpeople.moscow  
69 Ulitsa Bolshaya Gruzinskaya  
Metro Belorusskaya



PION CAFE

#### Pion

##### Summer cafe in the great outdoors

Set in idyllic Sokolniki Park, Pion offers you the chance to enjoy nature while feasting on a range of grill dishes or sampling an excellent selection of craft beers and ciders. Located next to the Pioneer outdoor cinema, it's the perfect spot to enjoy a relaxing al fresco lunch before heading over for a movie in the sunshine.

**+7 (905) 558 1991**

pioneer-cinema.ru/cafe pion  
10 Mitkovsky Proezd  
Metro Sokolniki

## Take it and go!

Four pages packed with the best places in Moscow to eat, drink, walk, shop, listen, watch, dance and sightsee. A new walking route and listings every week! **Take it, use it, save it!**

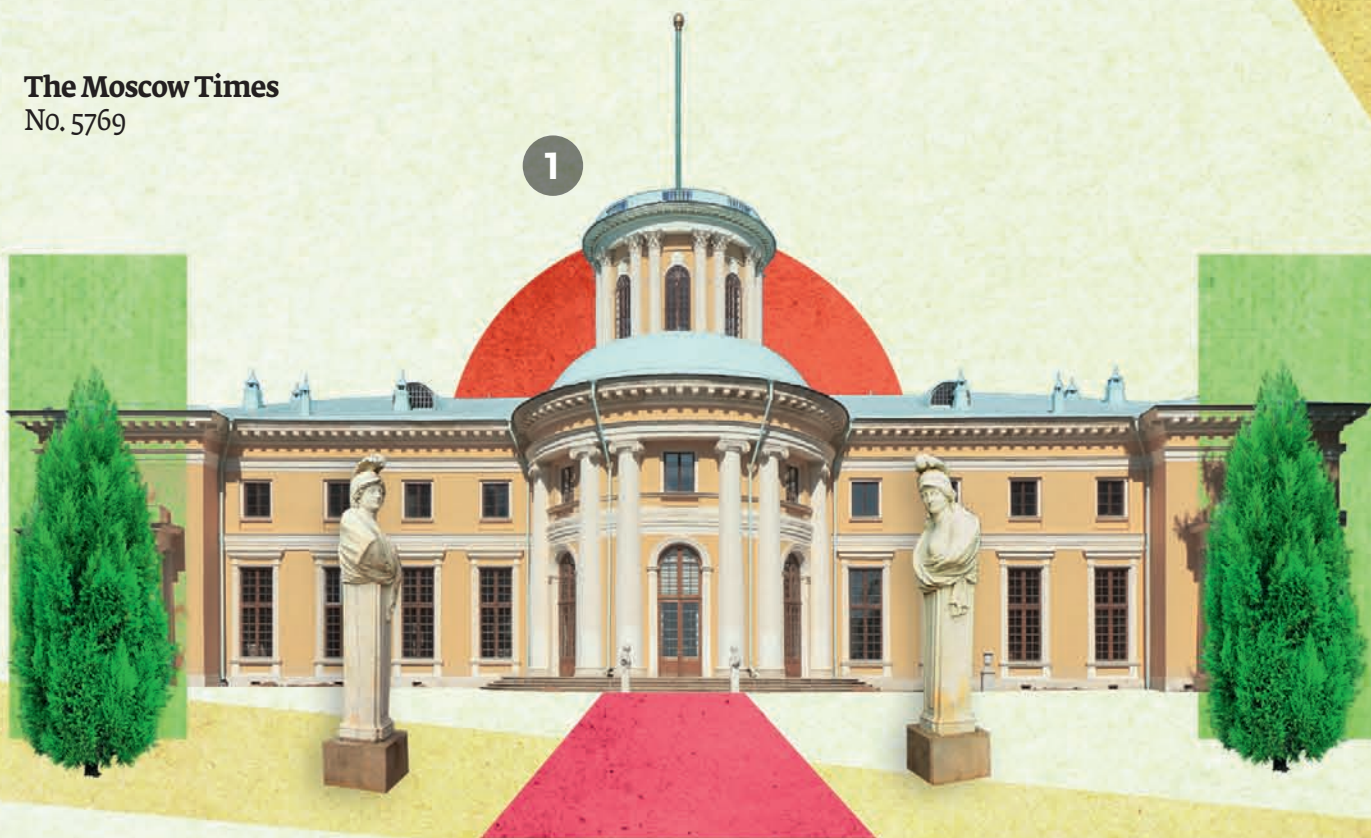


# 8 Walking Route

The Moscow Times  
No. 5769

## 1. Palace

Go to Tushinskaya metro station and then take bus 540, 541 or 549 right to the gate of the Arkhangelskoye Estate Museum on Ilyinskoye Shosse. After passing through many hands, Arkhangelskoye underwent construction in 1703 when owned by the Golitsyn family. But it had its glory years under the Yusupovs, who bought it in 1810 and lived here until it was nationalized in 1917. It is set on a high bluff above the Moscow River, with a Grand Palace, several smaller structures, a magnificent formal park dotted with statuary, and paths through the woods. Start with the palace, built by the Golitsyns but transformed into its present classical empire-style appearance by the Yusupovs in the 1820s. It was here that Emperor Alexander II sat and chatted on visits from his nearby estate at Ilyinskoye. Go in and wander about the rooms, which look much the way they did under the last Yusupovs, with plenty of classical statuary and paintings from the family's famous collection, and breathtaking public halls. Downstairs, there is a fun display of the kind of desserts that were served to guests and a selection of fancy carriages. Upstairs, there are exhibits of the Yusupov family history, with photo albums and a collection of engravings owned by one of the Sheremetev counts. You can also see part of the famous Yusupov library. When you leave, be sure to pose for a selfie with a few of the friendly stone lions and mythical creatures guarding the palace.



3



## 3. Tea House

To the right of the staircase to the lower terrace are several paths that eventually lead you to a charming one-room building topped by a dome, looking a bit like a yellow confection amid the greenery. This was once part of a large library designed by the Italian architect Pettondi. After most of it burned in 1829, the central section was remodeled. Called the Tea House, in good weather its doors were opened to let in the breezes off the river. Further to the right and a bit closer to the river is a mini-palace called the Caprice, first built for the Golitsyns and then redone for the Yusupovs with several salons, a billiard room, two bedrooms and a kitchen. For a period in the estate's history, this was rented out as a summer cottage. Not far from the Caprice, across Ilyinskoye Shosse, is another masterpiece: a theater that still has four sets and curtains designed by Pietro Gonzago, best known for his sets at La Scala in Milan. The theater, miraculously nearly unchanged from when it was built, holds musical and other events open to the public.

2

## 2. Lower Terrace

When you walk out of the palace, you find yourself on a broad, green terrace dotted with statues. The first terrace ends with a balustrade decorated with busts of famous leaders and thinkers — see if you can guess who they are — and a graceful double staircase flanked by more lions, dogs and other wondrous creatures. In the center of the lower terrace is a small fountain where Cupid cavorts with dolphins. The formal park contains more than 200 statues, including a bust of poet Alexander Pushkin, who visited the estate twice, and a rather spectacular bust of Catherine the Great as the goddess of justice with a quote in Latin from the Italian Renaissance poet Torquato Tasso: “You, to whom the heavens sent and destiny granted: to wish for what is just and achieve what is wished for.” Wander through tunnels of foliage — to shade strollers from the sun — to the paved area overlooking the river, flanked by two yellow buildings. These were built in the 1930s as part of the military sanatorium that took over the estate for most of the Soviet period. Look for a bit of reconstructed, artfully ruined gazebo and a little bridge behind the one on the left (facing the river). The sanatorium is still functioning, and you'll see signs for walking routes of various difficulty levels for patients.



# Arkhangelskoye Estate A Day at Moscow's Versailles

By Michele A. Berdy m.berdy@imedia.ru | Illustration by Oleg Borodin

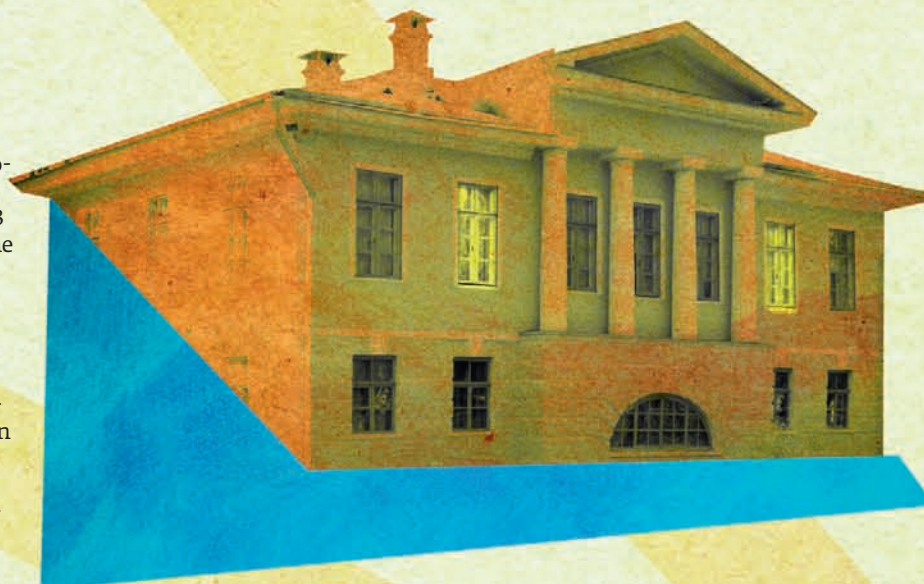
Spend a day in the largest, most romantic and most Petersburgian palace and grounds near Moscow





## 7. Office Wing

Walk back from the church and head toward the Grand Palace. On the way you'll see a two-story building across from the Storehouse. This unassuming little structure built in 1823 was the heart and soul of Arkhangelskoye: the estate office. Here the estate manager did all the planning, commissioning, and accounting for the entire estate. Unfortunately, the clerical interiors were not deemed worthy of preservation, and it is now an exhibition space that displays items from the estate collection and visiting shows. From here you can wander off to grab a bite to eat in one of the cafes on the grounds, or continue to explore the estate. After walking through the beautiful formal gardens, be sure to try the paths into the woods and down to the riverbank.



## 4. Colonnade

The last Yusupovs — Zinaida and Felix — to live on the estate had two sons. The younger, Felix, went down in history as one of the conspirators who murdered Grigory Rasputin. The older son, Nikolai, was killed in a duel at the age of 26 in 1908. The family commissioned the building of a chapel and mausoleum for his repose by the architect Roman Klein. The structure, which is reminiscent of the Kazan Cathedral in St. Petersburg, was not completed due to World War I and the 1917 Revolution. Never used as a family vault, today it is a concert venue.



## 5. Storehouse Over the Ravine

Walk around the Colonnade to the left and you'll soon see a striking, if puzzling, building. In the 18th century, the residents of Arkhangelskoye decided that they needed a storehouse, and rather than building it on level ground, of which there were thousands of acres, they decided it should be placed over a ravine leading down to the Moscow River. A decade or two later, in 1815, they asked the brilliant architect Osip Bove to reconstruct it, because when you must build a storehouse over a ravine, you need one of the most celebrated architects in the world to make it interesting. And so it is: a rather Gothic stone arch holding up a wooden storeroom over a lovely ravine.



## 6. Church of the Archangel Michael

Just past the Storehouse are the imposing Holy Gates, opening onto an old cobblestone path leading to the little white Church of the Archangel Michael. Built in the 1660s, it is the oldest structure on the estate, and the source of its name. The church rises up with rows of kokoshniki (decorative arches) like flames of white ice in a beautiful high spot overlooking the river. Behind it is the grave of Zinaida's sister, Tatyana, who died of typhus in 1888 at the age of 20. Above her grave is the Angel of Prayer, a sculpture by Mark Antokolsky.









*“Dagestan’s Health Ministry is against such rituals. It’s harmful to a woman’s body.” **Zalina Murtazaliyeva**, spokesperson.*

← Continued from Page 6

The procedure is always performed by a woman, usually an elder and sometimes a relative, in her own home rather than a medical facility. This woman is paid either with money or gifts and traditionally holds a high status in the community as a person protecting traditions and family values. Most often, the procedure is carried out on girls before they hit puberty; some women remember being 3-5 years old when they were cut.

It is difficult to say when the practice arrived in Dagestan and where it came from, says Sirazhudinova. However, one thing is clear: It is not new. “You can find the first mentions of the ritual in 100-year-old ethnographic studies,” she says. “It is not common for most parts of Dagestan, so it is probably linked to the ethnic traditions of specific communities and represents some sort of gender initiation.”

## Not a Problem?

Women interviewed by researchers expressed ambivalence toward the procedure. They remembered the experience as frightening, painful and humiliating; yet, many of them described it as a mandatory practice outlined in Islam and, therefore, something that they had to undergo and that they will perform on their daughters. “They don’t see it as a problem,” says Sirazhudinova. “They support it, because it is something that the community dictates. For women who live in a mountain community, it is very important. They give up their individuality completely.”

Many women believe that the procedure is necessary to reduce their sexuality, considered sinful. Some think that clitoris is a male organ that might eventually grow into a penis if they don’t cut it in time. Few of them see any alternative, says Almut Rochowanski, a women’s rights advocate who has worked on issues related to the North Caucasus for a decade.

“Every woman that has been through it was traumatized,” she says. “When she takes her daughter to do it, it breaks her heart, because she knows how much suffering is involved. But, most likely, she thinks that if she doesn’t do it, she and her children will be outcasts.” And while Rochowanski has seen women flee domestic violence, honor killings and political persecution, she has “never come across a single woman who would run away from FGM.” Girls who are subject to the cutting are too young to run away, and their mothers are too oppressed to take their children and leave their home, says Rochowanski.

There is little clarity on whether Islam condones or condemns FGM. Rushan Abbyasov, deputy chairman of Russia’s Council of Muftis, wrote in an online statement that Islam prohibits any deliberate harm to one’s body; therefore, the ritual is

## 0-15

Age range in which most girls undergo cutting.

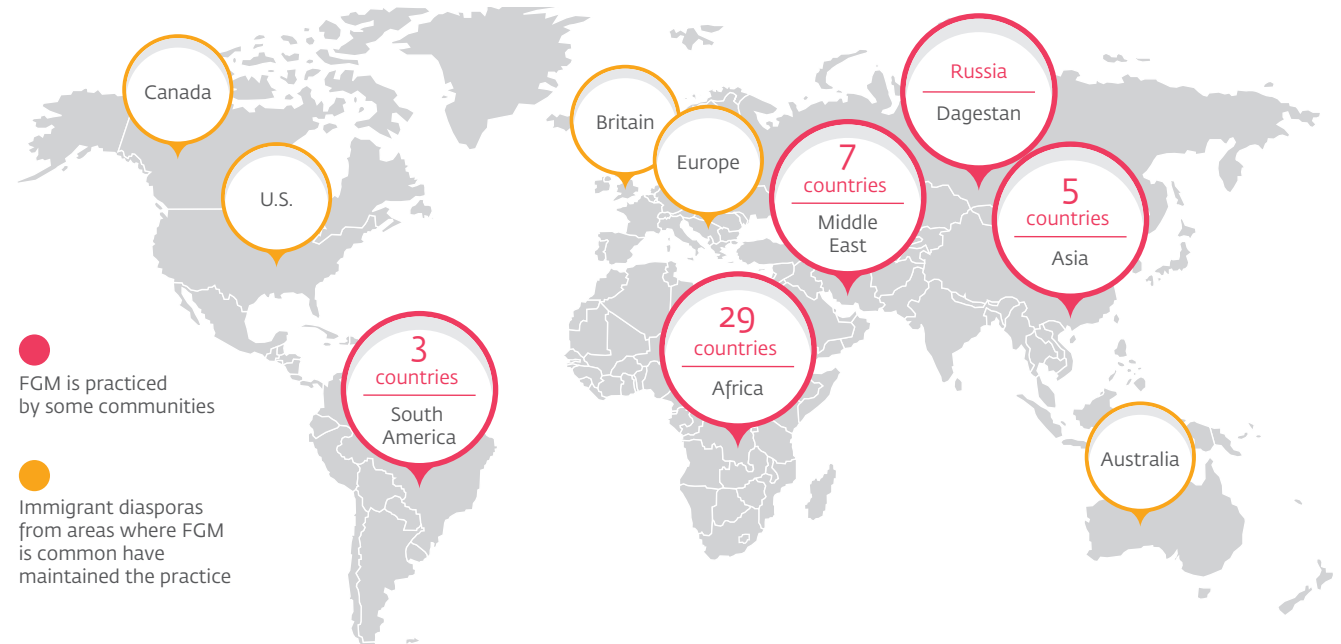


Female genital mutilation can result in infections, complications in childbirth, infertility and newborn deaths. It is linked to significantly diminished libido of women.

## >30

countries in Africa, the Middle East and Asia practice female genital mutilation.

## Female Genital Mutilation Worldwide



Source: UNFPA

unrelated to Islamic law and practice. And, according to the UN, in Africa FGM is practiced in Muslim, Christian and pagan communities.

Several Dagestani imams have told researchers that cutting is either “mandatory” or “desirable” for a girl. Dagestani’s Council of Muftis didn’t respond to The Moscow Times’ request for comment. However, local Muslim media in Dagestan have been promoting FGM as something healthy and beneficial for women for at least eight years now, says Zakir Magomedov, editor-in-chief of Daptar.ru, a website dedicated to women in Dagestan that has also reported on FGM in parts of the republic.

## Dealing With It

According to UN statistics, 200 million girls and women across 30 countries in Africa, the Middle East and Asia have undergone FGM. The World Health Organization calls for the eradication of the practice, deeming all forms of FGM harmful and in no way beneficial to a woman’s health. The organization lists excessive bleeding, infections, urinary and vaginal problems, sexual problems, increased risk of childbirth complications and newborn

deaths, and psychological trauma among the immediate and long-term complications of the practice.

The Russian Health Ministry echoes the sentiment. Following the publication of the Russian Justice Initiative report, it released a statement condemning FGM in Dagestan. The National Affairs Ministry of Dagestan and local children’s ombudsman came out with similar statements. The Prosecutor General’s Office is launching an investigation into the issue, and Maria Maksakova-Igenbergs, a prominent opera singer and State Duma lawmaker from the United Russia Party, has already put together a bill outlining a 10-year prison term for perpetrators of FGM.

Activists agree this is better than nothing, but doubt that external legal pressure will stop the practice in the near future. Eradicating FGM in the region will take decades of educational and outreach work in the region, says Rochowanski.

“I understand that for the Kremlin, women’s rights are not a top priority in the North Caucasus, Russia’s most violent and poorest region,” she says. “But they fail to understand that when women are empowered and gender equality actually works, communities become more peaceful and safe.” **TMT**

**CONFERENCE**

**SEPTEMBER 20**

MARRIOTT ROYAL AURORA

## CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICERS CLUB

**TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION**

- Standards in the field of administrative quality management: assessment, improvement, focus
- Optimization of records management: efficient records management organization and costs reduction
- Office support and maintenance at minimum costs and maximum efficiency
- The role of administrative supply departments in raising employee involvement

**SPEAKERS**

**Irina Andreeva**,  
Director of Administration, IIDF

**Yevgeniya Ignatyeva**,  
Administrative Director, Yota

**Leonid Kalinichenko**,  
Head of the Development Department, R7 group

**Natalya Kilimova**,  
Administrative Director, Biocad

**Anna Osipychyeva**,  
Head of Administrative Department, VTB Capital

**Nataliya Prokopenko**,  
Director for Administrative Matters, X5 Retail group

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HOTEL «MARRIOTT ROYAL AURORA»

## CIVIL CODE: PRACTICE OF APPLICATION AND RELEVANT CHANGES — 2016

**TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION**

- Ruling of the Supreme Court on the recovery of damages.
- Changes in arbitration legal proceedings.
- The first legal disputes as a result of the changes in the Civil Code.
- Status and responsibilities of a legal entity.
- New developments in corporate law.
- Changes aimed at improving the law of obligations, transactions and contract law in view of Federal Law No. 42 dated March 8, 2015.
- Objects of intellectual property: An Analysis of Change.

**SPEAKER**

**Evgeny Alexandrov**, Partner, Head of Legal Department, «Goroditsky and Partners»

**Pavel Gromov**, Director of Legal Department, «Auchan»

**Elena Kim**, Director of Legal Department, «Sibur»

**Oksana Petrova**, Director of Legal Department, «Dixy Group»

**Ekaterina Rykova**, Head of Legal Support Network, «CTC Media»

**Alexander Smirnov**, director of the Legal Department, Moscow Exchange

**Tatiana Sitnova**, Director of Legal Affairs, BIND (RUS), LLC

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"I think people will be surprised by how many people show up. I think there'll be a big crowd in Beijing."

Rudy Ying, Red Star defenseman.



8

nations are represented in the KHL, including China.

2008

The Kontinental Hockey League (KHL) was formed.

"Red Star will take time to succeed, but I have no doubt that we will succeed."

Vladimir Krechin, general manager.



KHL KUNLUN RED STAR

"China is a great sports nation. It has enormous human resource potential, possesses all modern technologies, and ice hockey enjoys full state support, so why not?" Vladimir Krechin, Red Star general manager.

# Little Red Puck

By **Matthew Bodner** m.bodner@imedia.ru | Twitter: @mattb0401

In a sign of ever closer ties, Russians are developing hockey in China.

After three straight preseason losses, Beijing's Red Star won their first match in the Kontinental Hockey League (KHL). Barely six weeks old, they toppled Kazakhstan's Barys Astana 3-1, prompting a team-to-team fight. Three days later, when the two teams met again, it was clear that a new KHL rivalry has been born.

It was the first game of Kazakhstan's President's Cup — a traditional curtain-raiser for the KHL season in late August. Tension between the teams was apparent within the first three minutes. Astana player Dmitry Ryspayev tried to single-handedly fight the entire Red Star roster, and saw some success.

Going into this Aug. 8 match with just 23 games of KHL play under his belt, Ryspayev had yet to score a single goal. But with 194 minutes spent in the penalty box during that time, the young Kazakh's genius for on-ice violence was clear. Red Star didn't have anyone on their roster to match that kind of pugilistic talent. The team's Russian coach, Vladimir Yurzinov Jr., pulled his players from the ice.

It was a strategic decision: accept a forfeit and ensure the team is healthy enough to fight another day. This match-up was, after all, intended to be a friendly preseason game and trial run leading into the Aug. 22 start of the KHL season. For Red Star, these games were also intended to set the stage for their arrival in Beijing for their first home game on Sept. 5.

Fighting would give the new Chinese audience the wrong idea about hockey, the KHL reasoned. When the league decided to hand Ryspayev a lifetime ban on Aug. 18, it used precisely those reasons to justify it. While there is a place for fair fighting in hockey, said KHL President Dmitry Chernyshenko,

there is no place for Ryspayev's assault on the "newcomer."

"We are constantly working to attract a new audience and broaden the game's geographical reach," Chernyshenko continued, "and Ryspayev's behavior is not merely harmful in a sporting context, it also blackens the image of the league."

## The Great Game

Kunlun Red Star, as the team is officially known, is China's first team to join the Russian-dominated KHL. Behind the National Hockey League (NHL), the KHL is widely regarded

as the second most competitive hockey league in the world. While there has been talk for over a year that Beijing was trying to assemble a KHL team, Red Star only joined the league on June 25.

The ceremony inducting Red Star into the KHL was picturesque. Russian President Vladimir Putin, in Beijing for a series of high-level state negotiations, sat next to his counterpart Xi Jinping.

The two watched as KHL Vice President Roman Rotenberg and chairman of the KHL board Gennady Timchenko — both longtime Putin allies — signed a formal agreement with Red Star's management.

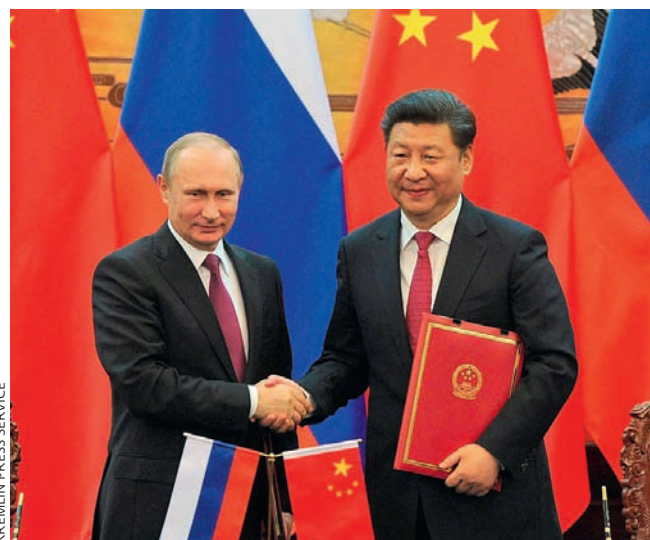
Ostensibly a Chinese team — ownership remains murky — Red Star is coached and managed by seasoned Russians.

The club has an explicit mission: to play a central role in developing Chinese hockey ahead of Beijing's hosting of the 2022 Winter Olympics, says Red Star General Manager Vladimir Krechin.

Hockey is one of the contest's most prestigious events, and Russia has been one of the world's preeminent hockey powers for decades, with the Soviet national team famously dominant at international competition.

In this way, teaching China hockey is one of the few areas of the Russia-China relationship where Moscow can confidently play the coveted role of senior partner.

"I see Red Star as a club that will bring ice hockey in China to the next level," Krechin



KREMLIN PRESS SERVICE

In Beijing, as part of an official visit by President Vladimir Putin, the heads of the Kontinental Hockey League and the Beijing hockey club, Kunlun Red Star, met to agree to the inclusion of Red Star in the 2016-17 season of the KHL Championship.





*"We are a good team, we just need more time to play together."*  
**Alexander Mikulovich**, Red Star defenseman.

29

teams compete in the KHL, including Red Star.



*"I try not to think about my legacy, I'm a coach and my mission is in the day-to-day."* **Vladimir Yurzinov**, Red Star coach.

Sept. 1

Red Star's first game of the official 2016-17 KHL season



HC KUNLUN RED STAR

American hockey player Chad Rau, one of the team's NHL veterans, plays the position of forward. He is one of the team's experienced foreign players.

## THE WORD'S WORTH

# Getting Wet the Russian Way

*Мокрый: wet*

By **Michele A. Berdy**  
Moscow-based translator and interpreter, author of "The Russian Word's Worth" (Glas), a collection of her columns.



YEVGENY PARYONOV

This is not one of Moscow's really wet summers — the ones when your umbrella never really dries out and you live in your wellies — but we've had a good dose of spectacular thunderstorms and record-breaking downpours. That means that you probably got caught in the rain — and you didn't just get wet, you got drenched.

Because you are human, you will want to describe your wet misfortune as expressively as you can to your significant other. Here, Russian is weak on verbs, but rich in adverbial phrases.

The basic "I got drenched" verb pair is промокать / промокнуть (to become thoroughly wet). You use the first part of the pair (imperfective) when you're talking about the process. Он стал промокать (He began to get really wet.) Промокнуть (perfective) is the one you use when you're already sopping wet. Начался дождь, ветер, мы все промокли (The rain began, the wind blew up, and we all got soaked.)

Now, that's not too satisfying, is it? You're not going to get tea and sympathy from "я промок." Add an adverbial phrase, like насквозь (all the way through): Дождь хлынул, и я промокла насквозь (The clouds opened and I was drenched through and through). Or до нитки (to every last thread): Очень скоро мы промокли до нитки (Very soon our clothes were sopping wet.) Or even deeper, до костей (down to your bones), although English doesn't let you go that far: Он попал в грозу и промок до костей (He got caught in a storm and was soaked to the skin.)

In Russian, your eyes can also get wet: У отца промокли глаза, но лишь на мгновение (My father's eyes filled with tears, but for just an instant.) Or you can wet something intentionally: Она промокала своё лицо влажной губкой (She moistened her face with a damp sponge.)

The other way of getting wet in Russian is from the inside out: потеть (to sweat). You can use the same verb for getting soaked: Было жарко, низкорослые болотные деревца тени давали немного, гимнастёрки промокли от пота (It was hot, the low swampy trees didn't give much shade, and the soldiers' shirts were drenched with sweat.)

In English, when you are wet and bedraggled, you look like a drowned rat. In Russian, you are мокрый, как мышь (wet as a mouse). No one seems to have a good explanation for the origins of the wet mouse simile, unless you believe that mice sweat a lot while running on their wheel. In any case, the expression means being drenched in sweat either due to illness or hard work. У неё держалась температура, и она лежала мокрая, как мышь (She had a fever that wouldn't break and lay in bed, soaked with sweat.) Он коллот дрова, пришёл мокрый, как мышь (He cut firewood and came home drenched in sweat.)

Sweating is often a metaphor for working hard: Они заставляли президентскую команду попотеть (They really made the president's team sweat and toil.) Работать до седьмого пота (work until the seventh sweat) is an odd expression in which the number seven really just means "a lot": Одни спину гнут, работают до седьмого пота, а другие, выходит, живут за их счёт (Some do back-breaking labor, work until they are covered in sweat, while others, it turns out, live off them.)

Ain't that the truth. Wet rodents of the world — unite! **TMT**

says. "The partnership will involve much more than just building one professional club. There is a vast, long-term program covering everything: youth programs, coaching programs, international tournaments for different levels, and much more."

The man tapped to spearhead this effort was Russian hockey coach Vladimir Yurzinov Jr., the son of a famous Soviet hockey player. His role is a critical one in Red Star's political goodwill mission. By building a team that can play what he calls "attractive hockey," Chinese fans can discover a sport they can get behind, and the sport's infrastructure will fall into place.

## Red Star Rising

"It is impossible at this moment to find Chinese players good enough to form an entire team," Yurzinov says. KHL regulations stipulate that at least 10 players represent the host na-

United States, support for the game has steadily grown. China has fielded teams in the less prestigious Asia League Ice Hockey (ALIH), and has a decent elementary school training system. The problem is in training players through high school and into college. The idea is for Red Star to eventually form an academy to fill this gap.

Meanwhile, Yurzinov's Chinese players, like Ying, must be the vanguard of a new generation of Chinese hockey talent. It is likely that Red Star players will in six years be called upon to form the backbone of a Chinese national team at the 2022 Beijing Olympics. "I see it as my duty to help the development of Chinese hockey," Ying says, expecting to heed the call down the line.

"The only reason hockey is not popular in China is that people don't know about it. I think once they see it, they will fall in love, and Red Star is really going to help with that," he says. In the short term, this will be handled by Red Star's foreign players. Even rookie Russians like Alexander Mikulovich say they have been encouraged to pass along their skills.

"The owner came in one day and said to us: 'Guys, I know that the Chinese players are not as good as you, but just try to be nice to them. And, if possible, teach them some stuff,'" Mikulovich says.

While this might sound patronizing to some, Ying said it was the key selling point that drew him from the traditional North American developmental leagues to the KHL. "I had a long conversation with my agent about how the guys on the team are going to take me under their wing. Some of them have close to 10 years experience on me, and they've been really helpful," he says.

While Yurzinov and his players are looking to bring their Chinese teammates up to their level, the coach needs to ensure he has

a team that can win. If Red Star is unable to develop into a competitive organization, the entire project could fail. "No one expects heroics from a newborn team, but who wants to be a bunch of clowns on ice? Who wants to lose day after day?" he says.

And so, as Red Star prepares for its first ever home game in Beijing on Sept. 1, the coaching staff continues to play with its roster. The latest rumors circulating online are that Red Star is courting its own answer to KHL hit men like banned Astana player Ryspayev.

On Aug. 18, KHL sportswriter Aivis Kalniņš wrote on Twitter that the club made a contract offer to infamous Canadian enforcer Brian McGrattan. The former NHL player holds a dubious record in the lesser American Hockey League (AHL): most time spent in the penalty box during one season, standing at 551 minutes.

Next time Red Star has to fight, it will be ready. **TMT**



HC KUNLUN RED STAR

tion, or are otherwise Russian. The team is then free to pad out the remainder of the roster with experienced NHL players and veterans from the KHL.

According to one of the team's Chinese recruits, 18-year-old Rudi Ying, the problem is mainly a difference in approach. "The basic mistake Chinese players make, he says, "is treating hockey like a skill sport, not a contact team sport."

The difference became apparent to Ying 10 years ago, when his family moved to the United States and he entered the youth league system there.

They also lack what Ying called "game sense" and a sense of competitiveness. This stems from the typical Chinese season schedule. During the crucial stretch from ages 12 to 18, Chinese players will play no more than 20 games a season, while kids in the United States and Europe typically play anywhere from 60 to 80 games.

But in the decade since Ying left China to play in the



"No one knows what is going to happen tomorrow." **Igor Gavrilov**, photographer.



The Moscow Times  
No. 5769

72 hours

Time that Gorbachev's location was unknown.

Aug. 22, 1991

Mikhail Gorbachev returns to Moscow after being held by coup plotters.



The current exhibition at the **Museum of Moscow** is accompanied by an education and discussion program about the events of August 1991, prepared jointly with the Boris Yeltsin Presidential Center.

# August 1991: Muscovites Remember

By **Ruth Moore** r.moore@imedia.ru | Twitter: @ruth\_skii

A timely exhibition remembers ordinary people caught up in extraordinary events.

On the morning of Aug. 19, 1991, Muscovites woke to the sight of tanks in the street. On television, normal programming was replaced by an unexpected showing of "Swan Lake," while Ekho Moskvy, the only independent radio station, was cut off the air. It was the start of a failed coup by hard-line members of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union to seize power from Mikhail Gorbachev. This dramatic episode is now immortalized in a new exhibition at the Museum of Moscow, which aims give a human face to the historic events.

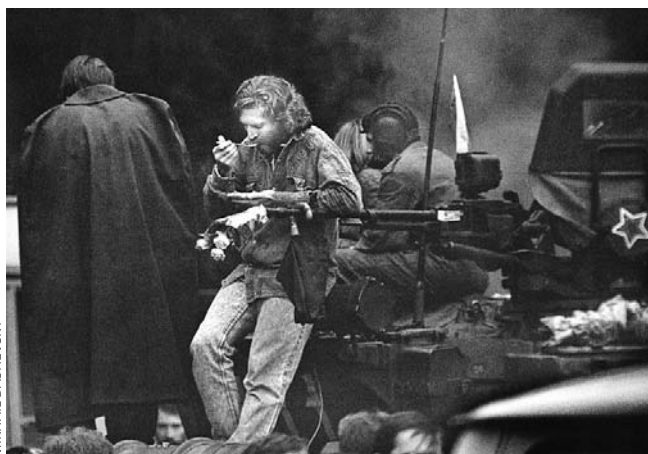
"August 1991. Muscovites Remember" combines photojournalism, first person narrative and documentary film to offer a panoramic perspective on the events during and following the attempted coup. Opened on the 25th anniversary of the unsuccessful putsch, the exhibition anchors ordinary Muscovites in the extraordinary circumstances in which they found themselves.

The Museum of Moscow shows the events of August 1991 through the prism of human emotions, relationships and recorded memories. The phenomenon of the putsch appears here as an episode of the urban community's collective memory," Alina Saprykina, the director of the Museum of Moscow, told The Moscow Times.

The list of photojournalists who contributed to the project includes some of the most illustrious individuals to have emerged from the field in the last 50 years: Gueorgui Pinkhassov, famed for his art-reportage shots, Igor Mukhin, widely considered to be one of Russia's greatest contemporary photographers, and Yury Lizunov, whose photograph of Mikhail Gorbachev and his family returning from Crimea won the 1992 World Press Photo contest in the category "People in the News." Other photographers involved in the project include Mikhail Dashevsky, Alexander Zemlyanichenko, Sergei Leontyev, Valery Shchekoldin and Igor Gavrilov.

## A Cultural Legacy

Walking through the exhibition you see the events of August 1991 unfold before your eyes: thousands of people gathering around the Russian White House, young men hoisting themselves onto the statue of KGB Founder Felix Dzerzhinsky just before it was toppled and a woman defiantly holding hands with her neighbors to create a human



Exhibition curator Yevgenia Kikodze considers the photographs both works of art and a part of Russia's cultural heritage.

chain against tanks approaching the White House.

The exhibition, though relatively small in scale, is a poignant reminder of the unprecedented, spontaneous mass reaction against the putsch. Perhaps it is particularly important this year, the first time Moscow City Hall refused activists permission to hold a remembrance rally outside the White House. "It's surprising that these events which were so remarkable for our country are so little documented or remembered," said Igor Gavrilov, one of the exhibition's contributing photographers, at the exhibition's opening.

"What you see in the exhibition are photographs that are both a document of a specific time, and artworks — they are part of a cultural legacy," said Yevgenia Kikodze, who curated the exhibition with Irina Chmyreva. This is certainly true of Mikhail Dashevsky's striking black and white photography "Stop," which captures the crowds descending on the statue of Felix Dzerzhinsky under a "stop" traffic sign.

The contributing photographers were themselves witnesses to the failed coup. Like the rest of the population, they were caught off guard by the speed of the events unfolding. Alexander Zemlyanichenko, a Russian photojour-

nalist, had a ticket to Cyprus for a family vacation for Aug. 19. But after a phone call from a friend, he sent his wife and son off to the airport, rushed to the center and began photographing events.

"Those two days seemed to me to be endless — it was as if I worked day and night for a week. And then there was victory, and fireworks over Red Square and great joy. I didn't think about prizes or awards, I just worked." To this day he says that people joke that he swapped his holiday for his first Pulitzer photography prize.

## A Front Row Seat to History

At the heart of the exhibition are the experiences of citizens as they witnessed history being made. To document this, the museum invited students from the Institute of Professional and Amateur Photography to take to the streets and ask Muscovites where they were on Aug. 19, 1991 and what they remembered.

"It was important to us that we had the reflections of ordinary Muscovites in the exhibition, because of course living through events such as these has an emotional impact on you," said Yevgenia Kikodze.

The Museum of Moscow has chosen to present these interviews in a simple format: Visitors see a large-scale photo of the individual and the location in Moscow where the interview took place. You can then listen to each individual answer a few simple questions about that day. Memories range from venturing out onto the streets to waiting for news by radios and televisions. Yelena, now 36, was nine at the time of the coup.

"I was with my grandmother. I remember that 'Swan Lake' was on television all of that day and that it was very surprising because we were waiting for 'Santa Barbara' [An American television soap opera]."

"August 1991. Muscovites Remember" is a rare exhibition. It is about thousands of ordinary people who peacefully resisted the coup and the photographers who documented them.

As photographer Valery Shchekoldin said, "It was a good time. I'm sorry that it ended so quickly." **TMT**

"August 1991. Muscovites Remember" runs through Sept. 23. Metro Park Kultury. [mosmuseum.ru](http://mosmuseum.ru)

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