

23 Million Live Below Poverty Line

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The  **Moscow Times**

The number of officially recognized impoverished Russians increased by 2.3 million to 22.9 million, or 16 percent of the population, in the first quarter of 2011, compared with the same period last year, according to the State Statistics Service.

The number of impoverished had decreased in the first two years after the 2008 recession, but the trend was reversed this year, Kommersant [reported](#).

The minimum monthly wage currently stands at 6,437 rubles (\$231), up 17 percent in the first quarter of last year. The increase, which was mostly due to rising food and services prices, is coupled with weak salary growth nationwide and has resulted in more people finding themselves below the poverty line, the report said.

Analysts told Kommersant that the new figures are more accurate than previous reports by the statistics service but still downplay the actual number of impoverished people in the country. No alternative estimates were provided.

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