

Federal Courts to Move to St. Petersburg, Report Says

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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As government plans to relocate federal ministries to Moscow's newly adjoined territories are reportedly being [reworked](#), officials are considering moving the Supreme and Higher Arbitration courts to St. Petersburg, a news report said Monday.

The decision to relocate both courts to downtown St. Petersburg followed a meeting of the presidential administration last week, Kommersant wrote, citing unidentified officials. The meeting was attended by the chairs of both courts, the newspaper said.

The move runs counter to plans by former President Dmitry Medvedev in April 2012 to place the Supreme and Higher Arbitration courts within Moscow's new boundaries. A heated debate caused over the proposal prompted President Vladimir Putin to initiate a review of the project.

Vyacheslav Lebedev, chairman of the Supreme Court, has already told his staff about the possible move, the report said.

The proposed location for the two courts is the site of a planned luxury residential complex, currently contracted to VTB bank, and close to the Constitutional Court.

The VTB contract, worth 47 billion rubles (\$1.5 billion), has not been suspended, but the company says construction of the complex has been postponed, according to Kommersant.

It is unclear when the move will take place, but it is expected to cost more than the 2008 relocation of the Constitutional Court because of the two courts' greater size and staff numbers.

The Constitutional Court ended up costing 5.3 billion rubles instead of the 221 million rubles originally projected.

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