

Medvedev Says Talk of Russia as Human Rights Violator 'Frivolous'

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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In an interview with the Brazilian daily O Globo, Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev said talk of Russia as a human rights violator was "frivolous" and suggested prison sentences received by Pussy Riot band members could have been less strict.

"I do not believe that we are an absolutely perfect, model society and an absolutely perfect state. We have our problems; we see them and know [about them], we have a young civil society and a young developing democracy, with some flaws. But to consider Russia an autocracy where human rights are violated is just frivolous, although such a view does exist," he said.

Russia has come under international criticism for its human rights record in recent years, with both Freedom House and Human Rights Watch releasing reports warning of a worsening political situation in Russia, citing failed reforms, crackdowns on freedom of assembly and harassment of Kremlin critics.

The recent Pussy Riot trial — in which three young women were sentenced to two years in prison for singing an anti-Putin song in Moscow's Christ the Savior Cathedral — gained international attention and further damaged Russia's image in the eyes of the rest of the world.

Medvedev commented on the circumstances of that case in the interview, saying "Maybe it wasn't necessary to apply the strictest punishment, maybe it would've been sufficient to do something less harsh, make a less harsh decision. But it was a court's decision."

This marks the second time Medvedev has expressed such an opinion. In September, about a month after the trial ended, he criticized the decision to keep the punk rockers in jail at a meeting with United Russia members.

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