

Russia Criticized in U.S. Human Rights Report

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Russia's anti-gay laws and attempts by the ousted Ukrainian president to quash opposition protests were among the world's most grievous human rights violations to emerge over the past year, the U.S. State Department said in its annual report.

The review of 200 countries and territories around the globe said a chemical attack last summer that killed more than 1,400 people in the suburbs of Damascus, Syria, was the worst human rights violation of 2013, though Russia and Ukraine were also highlighted for their governments' crackdowns on opponents and critics.

In a preface to the report, Secretary of State John Kerry noted "new and existing legislative restrictions, in countries such as Russia, that continue to curb civil society and political opposition and target marginalized populations, including religious and ethnic minorities, and the LGBT community."

The report, released on Thursday and published on the State Department's website, also singled out the administration of Ukraine's ousted President Viktor Yanukovich that had send riot police and snipers against anti-government demonstrators, while praising the protesters for their perseverance.

"As we all just saw Ukrainians demonstrated once again the power of people to determine how they are governed," Kerry said.

The report also called out Russia for suppressing activists, non-governmental groups and the media critical of the government, and criticized preparations for the Sochi Olympics, where "human rights activists documented evidence of forced labor of migrant workers."

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