

# Russian Government Proposes Adding \$50 Million to Judges' Pension Pot

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The Russian government has proposed putting aside an extra 2.4 billion rubles (\$53 million) for retired judges' pensions in 2015, a news report said.

United Russia lawmaker Andrei Isayev, who authored the bill, said the move was partly due to the extra judges that Russia acquired when it annexed Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula in March, the TASS news agency reported.

Isayev did not give a figure for the judiciary in Crimea, which has a population of 2.4 million people.

The hike will be reviewed by the State Duma later this month. The current draft budget allocated 20 billion rubles (\$440 million) for judges' pensions next year, RBC reported.

Russia had about 30,000 active judges as of last year, according to the Supreme Court. Their

salaries started at 100,000 rubles (\$2,200) a month last year, the government said, which is more than four times the official national average.

With pensions amounting to 75 percent of their salaries, Russian judges enjoy retirement income far above the average national pension, which stood at 9,900 rubles a month (\$220) last year, according to the State Statistics Service.

The Russian judiciary is notorious for its tendency to side with the prosecution, with acquittals accounting for less than 1 percent of all verdicts, according to independent judicial watchdog RosPravosudie.

Critics have long claimed the judiciary is de-facto subordinate to the Kremlin, which uses economic incentives to ensure their loyalty. In addition to high salaries, judges in Russia are entitled to free apartments from the state.

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