

Don't Discriminate Against Russia's Rich, Top Senator Says

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Valentina Matviyenko **Valery Sharifulin** / TASS

Rich Russians should not be discriminated against, the country's senate speaker has said days after Forbes published a ranking of the 100 wealthiest civil servants.

Regional deputies, governors and federal executive and legislative officials collectively [earned](#) 71 billion rubles (\$1.1 billion) in 2018, Forbes Russia said earlier this month. The business magazine used the incomes that the officials and their families had [declared](#) in its calculations.

Related article: [Russia's 100 Richest Officials Earned \\$1.1Bln Last Year – Forbes](#)

“I think you’ll agree with me that society shouldn’t discriminate against well-off people,” Valentina Matviyenko, the speaker of Russia's upper house of parliament, told reporters Thursday.

Addressing the dominance of regional deputies in the Forbes ranking, Matviyenko maintained that “it’s not a mass phenomenon, not a mass grab of legislative bodies by the rich.”

“You’re exaggerating the scale of the issue and thus fostering hatred toward rich people,” she was [quoted](#) by the RBC news website as saying.

Matviyenko [noted](#) that the rich get elected to office because “voters see them as successful people,” the state-run TASS news agency quoted her as saying.

“They hope that they will be able to make the country and the citizens rich.”

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