

**EMBARGOED UNTIL 6:00 P.M. EDT,  
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## **BILLIONAIRE BUST ON FORBES' 2009 LIST**

### **Bill Gates Returns to #1 Rank; 355 Drop Off List**

**New York, NY (March 11, 2009)** — This year there are fewer billionaires on the planet, and the richest people in the world have gotten poorer. According to **Forbes' 2009 list of the World's Billionaires (p. 80)**, its annual snapshot of worldwide wealth, the total number of billionaires fell to 793 from 1,125. This marks the first time since 2003 that the number of billionaires worldwide has dropped from one year to the next. Even among those who have managed to remain billionaires, there has been a vast decrease in wealth: the total net worth of this year's list is \$2.4 trillion, down \$2 trillion from \$4.4 trillion last year. The average billionaire is now worth \$3 billion, down from \$3.9 billion in 2008. Despite losing \$18 billion over the past 12 months, **Bill Gates (#1)** has reclaimed his title as the richest man in the world with a total net worth of \$40 billion. **Warren Buffett** slips to **#2** with \$37 billion, after losing \$25 billion in the past year due to the decline in value of Berkshire Hathaway stock. Mexican telecom titan **Carlos Slim Helu (#3)** lost \$25 billion, and comes in at **#3**. The top 3 on Forbes' list have lost a combined \$68 billion in the past year.

The 2009 list represents citizens from 52 countries and 1 principality. As fortunes fell in Asia and Russia, Americans once again dominate the superrich, occupying 10 of the Top 20 spots, up from only 4 last year. New York City Mayor **Michael Bloomberg (#17)**, who makes a salary of \$1 per year as Mayor, is the only member of the Top 20 whose net worth has risen during the past year. This is due to a reevaluation of Bloomberg LP: the Mayor bought a 20% stake from cash-strapped Merrill Lynch last July for \$4.5 billion. Russia has lost nearly two-thirds of its billionaires during the past year and is down to 32 billionaires. The 10 biggest dollar losers on this year's list lost a combined \$238 billion in the past year, more than the GDP of Ireland or Israel. Still, these tycoons are worth a combined \$175 billion, and half of them are still among the 10 richest people on the planet. **Anil Ambani (#34)** was last year's biggest gainer and is this year's biggest loser: he lost \$32 billion over the last 12 months. Fellow Indian **Lakshmi Mittal (#8)** also endured significant losses, with \$25.7 billion wiped from his personal fortune during the past year. There were 355 billionaires who fell off the list this year, including former AIG chief executive Maurice "Hank" Greenberg, former head of Citigroup Sandy Weill, and Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg.

#### **This year's Top Ten include:**

<b>RANK</b>	<b>NAME</b>	<b>NET WORTH</b>	<b>ORIGIN OF WEALTH</b>	<b>UP/DOWN</b>	<b>COUNTRY (By Citizenship)</b>
1	William Gates III	\$40 billion	Microsoft	Down	United States
2	Warren Buffett	\$37 billion	Berkshire Hathaway	Down	United States
3	Carlos Slim Helu & family	\$35 billion	Telecom	Down	Mexico
4	Lawrence Ellison	\$22.5 billion	Oracle	Down	United States
5	Ingvar Kamprad & family	\$22 billion	Ikea	Down	Sweden
6	Karl Albrecht	\$21.5 billion	Aldi	Down	Germany
7	Mukesh Ambani	\$19.5 billion	Petrochemicals	Down	India
8	Lakshmi Mittal		Steel	Down	India
9	Theo Albrecht	\$19.3 billion	Aldi, Trader Joe's	Down	Germany
10	Amancia Ortega	\$18.3 billion	Zara	Down	Spain

**For the full list, interactive map, slide shows and more, visit [www.forbes.com/billionaires](http://www.forbes.com/billionaires) after 6 p.m. EDT on Wednesday, March 11, 2009.**

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