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Most Russians Support Ban on Traumatic Pistols, Poll Says

By The Moscow Times

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Over half of Russians support a ban on the sale of traumatic pistols, amid calls from a number of State Duma deputies to address people's attitudes to weapons, a Levada Center poll indicates.

Banning traumatic pistols, also known as non-lethal weapons, was supported by 58 percent of the poll's participants, while 34 percent said they were opposed to the idea, Kommersant reported Monday, citing the poll's results.

The idea to legalize possession of firearms for all adult citizens was also rejected by 81 percent of those surveyed, compared with 15 percent who said it should be allowed.

An amendment approved by the Duma that comes into effect on July 30 imposes a fine of 40,000 to 100,000 rubles ($1,230 to $3,085) for discharging a firearm within city limits. The firearm would also be confiscated.

Duma Deputy Dmitry Vyatkin said the procedure for purchasing traumatic weapons should be made more stringent and that a complete ban could be appropriate. He said people should not be allowed to carry handguns due to a "high level of aggression" in society.

But another deputy, Alexei Zhuravlev from the ruling United Russia party, said that possession of firearms was legal in Russia before the Bolshevik revolution of 1917 and that "there were no problems." He said, however, that the Russia's gun culture "leaves much to be desired."

"If sales of pistols are legalized, the mentality will change, too," the lawmaker said.

No margin for error was given in the poll.

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