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Russia's Top Investigator Bastrykin Defends Death Penalty

By The Moscow Times

May 29, 2014



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The head of Russia's Investigative Committee, Alexander Bastrykin, has defended the death penalty, suggesting it serves to discourage some from committing extreme crimes such as acts of terrorism.

Speaking at a meeting of State Duma deputies on Thursday, Bastrykin opposed removing the death penalty as a punishment from the country's Criminal Code, though he does not support it "as a general practice," Interfax reported.

"But I think that it should be in our legislation for the hypothetical possibility of its application," he said.

Bastrykin cited the execution of the 2011 Minsk metro bombers as an example of a situation

where the death penalty served a positive cause.

"Two people were executed and now the subject is closed," he said, newspaper Gazeta.ru cited Bastrykin as saying. "I think Belarus will not witness such terrible events anytime soon."

Dmitry Konovalov and Vladislav Kovalyov, both 25, were sentenced to death by a Belarussian court in 2011 for staging a bomb attack on a metro station in Minsk in which 15 people were killed.

In Russia, a moratorium on the death penalty has been in place since 1997, pending ratification by the State Duma on its abolition.

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