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Russia Looks to Launch Reindeer Police Force

By The Moscow Times

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Reindeer are uniquely qualified to fight crime in the Siberian tundra.

Giving Rudolf the Red-Nosed Reindeer a shot at alternative employment, Russian authorities have moved to launch a reindeer police force to combat crime above the Polar Circle.

Reindeer are uniquely equipped to fight petty crime among Siberia's indigenous peoples, Izvestia daily reported Tuesday, citing police sources.

Siberia's indigenous minority groups tend to be savvy at handling reindeer, thus enabling them to sled off into the tundra when faced with the need to flee a crime scene, the report said.

While chasing down criminal suspects, police are relegated to snowmobiles, but those are no match for reindeer, which tend not to break down or run out of gas in the middle of the tundra, a police official was cited as saying.

Of 163 crimes registered in the Yamalsky municipality of the Yamal-Nenets autonomous district in western Siberia during the first nine months of 2014, 127 were reportedly committed by representatives of indigenous minorities, according to Interfax. Citing local police, the report noted the figures are typical to the entire district.

Drunken fights, robberies and acts of hooliganism dominated the list of crimes committed in Yamalsky. Many Siberian indigenous people are known to be easily susceptible to alcoholism for genetic reasons.

Russian police have been asking for reindeers since 2012, but the ungulates have yet to be deployed to maintain public order in the tundra.

Plans for police camels, outlined at the same time, also remain tentative.

Meanwhile, the Russian Defense Ministry is already using war mules and donkeys, deploying 150 of them for the use of Russia's mountain troops. The sturdy and sure-footed animals reportedly received rave reviews from the soldiers.

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