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Teenager Found Guilty of Murder After Shootout at Moscow School

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A Moscow city court sentenced a teenage boy to mandatory psychiatric treatment.

A Moscow city court has found a teenage boy guilty of murder and attempted murder after two students were killed in a school shooting that rocked the Russian capital last year.

During a closed hearing on Tuesday, the court sentenced the boy to mandatory psychiatric treatment after psychiatrists declared him insane, the Gazeta.ru news site reported.

The teenager, who was armed with two rifles, shot and killed a geography teacher before taking a class hostage in February last year. He also shot at two policemen who were responding to the incident, killing one of the men and severely injuring the other.

Considering his age and absence of a previous criminal record, the defendant would likely have been sentenced to between five and seven years behind bars if he had been pronounced sane, a lawyer for one of the victims, Ilya Trunov, was quoted as saying by Gazeta.ru.
The maximum sentence the court could have handed down was 10 years.

A sentence of psychiatric treatment, however, means that the convict will undergo a new evaluation every six months, at which time he could be declared fit for release, Trunov added.

Russian law sets no limit on the duration of mandatory psychiatric treatment, meaning that the shooter could indefinitely be kept in a psychiatric facility, defense lawyer Vladimir Levin said.

"In any case, he will be undergoing treatment for much longer than he would have spent behind bars, had he been pronounced sane," Levin was quoted as saying by Gazeta.ru.

A hostage-taking charge against the teenager was dropped, after the court ruled that his actions should have been categorized as a different type of crime — illegal detention. Under Russian law, this charge cannot be brought against minor, Gazeta.ru cited Judge Yulia Shelepova as saying.

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