

# Russian Lawmakers Consider Letting Cops Shoot at Women, Crowds

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Federal lawmakers are considering amending a law that prohibits police officers from firing into crowds or at women, newspaper Kommersant reported Thursday.

A bill introduced to the State Duma, Russia's lower house of parliament, stipulates that police officers would be granted a “presumption of trust and support,” meaning they would not face prosecution for any action taken while on duty, so long as the action was taken for a valid purpose and in accordance with existing laws.

At present, police are prohibited from shooting at women in general. The draft legislation, introduced by lawmaker Irina Yarovaya of the United Russia party, would limit this clause, leaving it applicable only to women with “visible signs of pregnancy.”

Police are likewise currently forbidden from firing into crowds. Under Yarovaya's bill, they

would be permitted to do so in order to prevent acts of terror or hostage situations, Kommersant reported.

Under the current law, police cannot conduct body searches or inspect cars or personal belongings without compelling evidence that weapons or narcotics are present. Under the proposed legislation, the evidentiary standard would take a nosedive. Police could conduct these searches with mere “reasonable suspicion” that these illicit items might be found.

The bill further proposes that police officers should be entitled to enter private homes in order to detain individuals, even if they hadn't been charged or officially declared criminal suspects. In such situations, the officer would be required to inform the relevant court, prosecutor and property owner of his or her actions after the fact, according to Kommersant.

If passed, the legislation would also allow police to force cars open in the interest of public safety. The police officer would reportedly be obligated in this case to warn the owner of the car in advance, and to make proper introductions.

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