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Cossack Volunteers to Guard Moscow's Arbat Street

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Cossack patrols are now active in several Moscow parks, as well as at popular tourist sites such as the All-Russia Exhibition Center.

Volunteer Cossack patrols may appear on Moscow's Novy Arbat, the capital's main tourist thoroughfare, by the end of the year, according to a note published on the Moscow city government's website on Tuesday.

The Cossack guards would be considered part of the city's auxiliary police force, according to the note.

"By law, the auxiliary police are on duty outside work hours — after 6 p.m., and for no more than four hours a day," the Moscow auxiliary police chief Vladimir Semerda was quoted as saying.

However, unlike regular members of the auxiliary force, they would be active throughout the day.

The force, tasked with maintaining order on streets and in courtyards, has been revived during Vladimir Putin's presidency. Cossack patrols are now active in several Moscow parks, as well as at popular tourist sites such as the All-Russia Exhibition Center.

In 2012, they also appeared at the capital's Belorussky Station, with the city government later saying that they had not been consulted in the matter, BBC's Russian-language service reported.

A month later, the head of Moscow's south-eastern district banned the use of Cossack volunteer squads for crowd control, citing their frequent failure to get official permission for their actions, the report went on to say.

According to the TASS news agency, volunteer guards usually act in tandem with police officers, and have no right to fine or detain members of the public.

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