

Moscow Security Guards Beat Customer, Breaking Ribs - Report

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Security guards at a Moscow supermarket have allegedly beaten a customer, breaking four of his ribs, after accusing him of trying to steal a skillet, tabloid-style LifeNews television reported on its website Tuesday.

Video footage that LifeNews said was captured by closed circuit cameras at an “Avoska” supermarket in southern Moscow showed security guards grabbing a man, pushing him past the cash registers and outside the retail space — even as the man tried to hold on to a railing — and throwing him off the floor.

The man, 48, went to the nearest clinic after the incident, and was diagnosed with four fractured ribs and multiple bruises, the report said, adding the medical data was forwarded to police.

The alleged victim said he lived near the Avoska store, frequently shopped there, had no intention of stealing anything, and picked up the skillet to show it to his wife who accompanied him to the supermarket, LifeNews reported.

Shoplifting in Russia has reportedly been on the rise amid the nosedive of the ruble and an economic decline that followed Western sanctions against Moscow for its meddling in Ukraine.

The response by store security guards — usually low-paid employees pressured by their bosses to curtail shoplifting — seems to have been growing increasingly severe, according to accounts on Russia's social networks and media reports.

Last summer, police detained a security guard from a “Pyatyorochka” supermarket in southeastern Moscow for allegedly hitting a 7-year-old boy with a electroshock weapon and injuring him, after accusing the child of trying to steal ice cream, NTV television reported at that time, citing Interior Ministry spokesman Andrei Galiakberov.

A few days earlier, a local news portal in the Voronezh region reported that a 76-year-old woman suffered a hypertensive crisis — or a extreme increase in blood pressure — after store security guards mistakenly accused her of shoplifting, searched her bags and allegedly threatened to “lock [her] up at a police station.”

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