

Russia's Overcrowded Prison Service Asks for Reduction in Arrests

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Russia's Federal Penitentiary Service (FPS) has repeatedly asked officials to make less arrests in a bid to ease prison overcrowding, Russian newspaper Kommersant reported.

Writing on her blog, member of Moscow's Public Supervisory Commission Anna Karetnikova said that the FPS still had not received a reply from either the police or court officials.

The situation in the city's already overcrowded jails has already dramatically worsened in May, Karetnikova wrote, with some individual prison cells currently 13 inmates over capacity.

In her blog, Karetnikova described her visit to a Moscow's women's detention center in late April. She wrote that overcrowding and a lack of beds was forcing inmates to sleep on the floor. The jail's administration ignored all complaints from inmates and in some cases deliberately made their living conditions worse, she said. She also wrote that inmates lacked proper access to medical care, including those with obvious health problems.

Member of Presidential Human Rights Council Pavel Chikov said that the number of detainees in Russia had been steadily growing since 2012, particularly in urban areas. Most inmates are

detained on financial or drugs charges, he said, Kommersant reported.

FPS officials have been informing the courts and the police on overcrowded jails every month, Kommersant reported. Lawyer Vladislav Grib, a member of the FPS Supervisory Council, said that FPS was not able to resolve the problem on its own and that the government and the president needed to intervene.

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