

Russian Ministers Ask Duma to Explain New Anti-Terror Legislation

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Russia's Cabinet ministers have asked the country's lawmakers to provide grounds for amendments to anti-terror legislation, submitted to the lower house of parliament, the State Duma, for approval on Friday, state news agency TASS reported.

In an official response to the initiative, Deputy Prime Minister Sergei Prikhodko said the proposed article, which makes failing to report a crime a criminal offense, required additional explanation. He said that individuals have a constitutional right not to testify against themselves or family, TASS reported. Therefore, criminal responsibility for not reporting a crime should not be established by law as it can be applied too broadly.

Prihodko added that the new article, titled "Act of International Terrorism," could complicate the legal process and contradict the existing article on terror acts, TASS reported.

The government's view is that the introduction of non-varied penalties for certain crimes, namely imprisonment for a set period, would disallow the personalization of punishment. Mitigating circumstances could no longer be taken into account, TASS reported.

According to the proposed amendments, individuals who do not report certain crimes or plans for crimes — including terrorist attacks, rebellion or hostage taking — could be sentenced to three years in prison. The amendments also impose responsibility for planned terrorist crimes for individuals as young as 14 years old, TASS reported.

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