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Putin Reprimands Penitentiary Service for Prison Conditions

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Sergei Porter / Vedomosti

Russian President Vladimir Putin has reminded officials of the Federal Penitentiary Service that they must follow requirements for living conditions in correctional facilities, the Interfax news agency reported.

"It is important for the Federal Penitentiary Service to strictly comply with prisoners' detention conditions and never forget that, although they have made mistakes, they are also citizens of Russia," Putin said at a meeting with newly appointed senior officers and prosecutors.

He also called upon Penitentiary Service officials to improve security in detention centers and correctional facilities by acquiring updated technology.

Putin's comments come amid a scandal surrounding prison conditions. On Nov. 1, the wife of jailed protester Ildar Dadin forwarded his lawyer a letter in which he complained that he faced systematic beatings and "torture" in his penal colony. News of the allegations provoked a

public outcry.

Both the Investigative Committee and the Federal Penitentiary Service carried out their own investigations of Dadin's allegations. Both departments said they did not find evidence of systematic violence and accused Dadin of falsifying stories about being beaten.

At a press conference on Wednesday, Russia's Commissioner for Human Rights, Tatyana Moskalkova, said that she does not believe there is a serious problem with violence in Russia's penal system.

"There is a problem, but I'm not about to make the conclusion that it is systemic," Moskalkova said. "The problem of one specific person, or even ten people out of 600,000, is not a problem of the system."

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