

More Than One Million Russians Convicted in 2016

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More than one million Russians were found guilty of a crime in 2016, according to data released on Thursday by Russia's Federal Penitentiary Service.

The country's prison population as a whole fell by 15,000 people in the past year, dropping to 630,155 inmates on Jan. 1 2017.

Some 519,500 men and 49,200 women are serving prison terms in penal colonies, with a further 107,300 inmates held in pre-trial detention, the prison service said in a press release on its website.

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Fifty people were sentenced to life imprisonment over the past 12 months, boosting the total

figure to just over 2,000 prisoners.

Russia's prison system has come under harsh scrutiny in recent months amid allegations of overcrowding and even torture at the hands of prison guards.

Sergei Tsygankov, the Federal Prison Service's Moscow director, said detention centers in the capital are currently overpopulated by roughly 2,000 people. Independent activists estimate the real figure is much higher.

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