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Russian Courts Acquit 0.3% of People at Trials in 2017

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Alexander Avilov / Moskva News Agency

Russian courts are continuing to bat a near-perfect in terms of convictions handed out last year.

Courts in the country are notorious for an average acquittal rate of 0.3 percent, partly explained by the criminal justice system's reluctance to admit mistakes.

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The 0.3 percent figure held up in 2017 when only 2,900 of 957,900 people who faced trial were acquitted, Supreme Court chairman Vyacheslav Lebedev said on Tuesday.

Some 744,000 people were convicted in total last year, Lebedev said at the meeting with the heads of Russian courts in Moscow.

The remaining 9,000 people were involuntarily committed for psychiatric treatment, the RBC

business portal reported Tuesday.

Courts dropped the cases of another 202,000 people on various procedural grounds before coming to a ruling. Retired judge Sergei Pashin told RBC that the figure does not necessarily reflect on the court as a "merciful" body.

"When a court stops proceedings due to a statute of limitations, an amnesty, or a settlement between the victim and the accused [...] they simply have no other way out," Pashin told RBC.

"This is not the will of the court, but the inevitable enforcement of the law," he said.

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