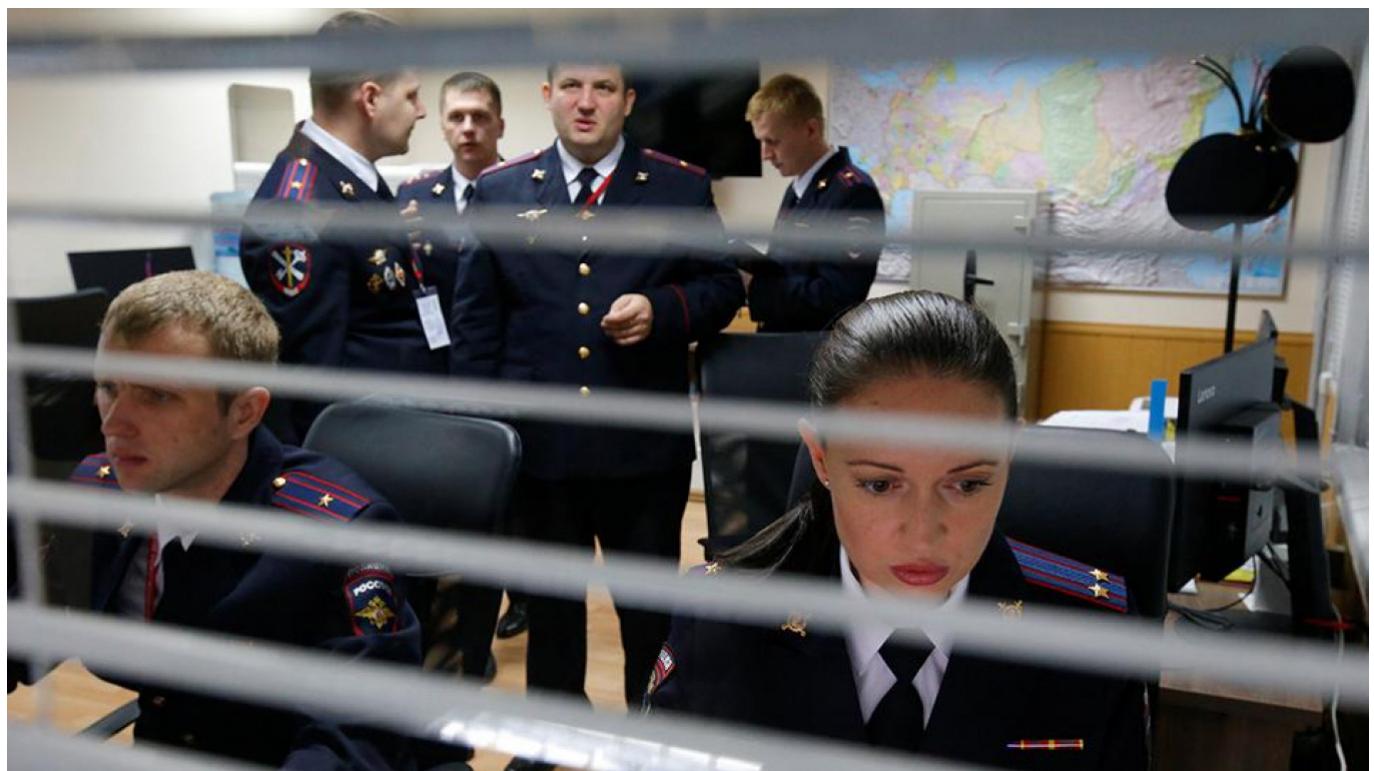


# Russian Police Ordered to Report 'Good News Only' During World Cup

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Sergei Karpukhin / Reuters

Russian police have been [instructed](#) not to publish their usual crime reports and instead share exclusively positive news during the month of the World Cup.

Reports of [robbed](#) and [scammed](#) tourists have [multiplied](#) in the run-up to the tournament as up to a million football fans plan to descend on the 11 Russian host cities. Regional outlets [began reporting](#) this week that local Interior Ministry press offices have been instructed to self-censor any news that could spark concern about crime rates.

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"Suspend the publication in the media of the results of investigations and preventive measures between June 5 and July 25, 2018," the Mediazona news website quoted a previously published regional Interior Ministry directive on Wednesday.

No regional Interior Ministry website has published its daily crime reports since June 6, the news outlet found in its examination of local websites.

There were 1,500 search results for the terms “detain,” “solve,” “wanted” or “Criminal Code” the week before; and 20 times fewer results between June 7 and June 13.

Police spokespeople in the Belgorod, Krasnodar and Tver regions confirmed the ‘no bad news’ trend to Mediazona, but did not directly attribute it to the June 14 to July 15 World Cup.

“We’re not breaking our heads about it. We write about things that could spark interest, things that are cheerful. We’re not making things up,” Belgorod region spokesman Alexei Goncharuk was quoted as saying.

In addition to the nationwide ban on negative news, Russian transportation workers are being taught to smile at foreign fans who may be less accustomed to the notoriously stone-faced demeanor many Russians consider typical.

Meanwhile, the Kremlin denied reports that it had asked Syria and Israel to cease hostilities for the duration of the World Cup, saying instead that it is Russia’s “permanent policy” to urge both sides to avoid escalation.

*Reuters contributed reporting.*

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