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Russian Police Order 8,000 Long-Range Taser Guns for Crowd Control, Media Reports

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Dmitri Lovetsky / AP / TASS

Russia's Interior Ministry will purchase 8,000 sets of taser weapons that can "neutralize offenders from a distance of several meters", Interfax reported Wednesday, citing contract information on its SPARK database.

Last month, Russia media reported that the country's National Guard bought two vans equipped with non-lethal lasers designed to disperse protesters and maintain crowd control. Human rights activists have in the past accused Russian police of brutality during the anti-government protests. A 2017 poll found that a quarter of Russians say they have witnessed or experienced beatings carried out by police or medical staff.

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The ministry will receive 8,000 sets of AIR-107U taser guns by May 2019 in an order worth 80.8 million rubles ($1.2 million), Interfax reported, citing contract details.

According to the producer of the weapon, the Mart company, the guns come in the form of a baton and can shock targets from a distance of up to 4.5 meters.

Due to their power exceeding allowances for civilian use, they are only sold to licensed officers of the Interior Ministry.

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