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Moscow Duma Chairman Defends Automated System That Overshot Vote Tally

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Sergei Kiselyov / Moskva News Agency

Machines don't make mistakes — or so we're led to believe.

A Moscow municipal lawmaker put the maxim to the test when she decided to do a head count of voters present during a recent Duma session.

To her chagrin, Moscow City Duma deputy Yelena Shuvalova found herself 10 people short compared with the automated count posted to a screen in the Duma hall, according to video of a Dec. 26 meeting she made public this week.

"The screen shows a vote of 33 for and three against — that's 36 people," the Communist Party member told City Duma chairman Alexei Shaposhnikov after conducting her headcount. "But I counted 26."

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The chairman, however, was unwavering in his backing of the voting system. “I trust it fully,” he told Shuvalova.

When challenged, Shaposhnikov doubled down with his defense, telling the assemblywoman: “The existing system fully meets the Duma’s working capacity.”

In another video, Shuvalova postulated that other vote-counting machines could operate in exactly the same way.

“Where’s the guarantee for Muscovites?” she asked.

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