

Russian Lawmakers Pass Bill to Punish Organized Crime Bosses

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Russian lawmakers have passed legislation that extends punishments for those holding senior positions in organized crime groups.

Lawmakers [estimate](#) that members of organized crime groups in Russia committed more than 15,000 felonies in 2018.

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Russia's upper-house Federation Council [voted](#) in favor of the organized-crime bill on Wednesday, sending it to President Vladimir Putin's desk to be signed into law.

Under the proposal Putin submitted on Feb. 14, those found guilty of "creating a criminal organization" or participating in senior-level meetings will face up to 20 years in jail. Those who hold a "high rank" in the criminal enterprise risk a lifetime sentence for the same

crimes.

Occupying a “high rank in the criminal hierarchy” in itself is punishable by up to 15 years in prison.

Individuals prosecuted for all four of the proposed crimes are also subject to fines of up to 5 million rubles (\$77,000). Those who cooperate with the authorities or voluntarily leave the criminal organization can be exonerated if they are not accused of other offenses.

Lower-house State Duma deputies [passed](#) the legislation amending Russia’s existing Criminal Code in three readings between Feb. 19 and March 14.

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