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Russia Ordered to Pay $1M to Police Brutality Victims

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The rulings come amid a series of high-profile torture scandals in Russian law enforcement. **Maxim Shipenkov / EPA / TASS**

Fifty Russian citizens have been awarded compensation totaling more than 1 million euros ($1.1 million) for police brutality and illegal searches, according to four European human rights court rulings issued Tuesday.

Russia paid more than 600 million rubles ($9.5 million) to its citizens in compliance with European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) rulings in 2019, officials said. Russia's payouts over 20 years, they said, totaled 200 million euros.

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Three of the latest ECHR rulings award 29 Russian citizens 835,000 euros on claims of torture through electric shocks, needles in nails and beatings with truncheons, according to a tally by the MBKh News website.

In its fourth ruling, the ECHR awarded 21 Russian lawyers 180,000 euros on claims of unlawful searches.

Russian law enforcement has been rocked by several torture scandals in recent years, with reported victims including LGBT people in Chechnya, Jehovah's Witnesses and prisoners.

President Vladimir Putin in 2015 allowed the Russian Constitutional Court to overrule decisions issued by the Strasbourg-based judiciary. Putin's recent constitutional shake-up includes a proposal for Russian law to take precedence over international rulings, a clause that experts viewed as targeting the ECHR.

The share of Russian cases in Europe's top human rights court reached a seven-year high in 2019, according to its recently released annual report.

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