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Law Punishing Acts of Sabotage With Life Sentences Wins Duma Support

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Russian State Duma Speaker Vyacheslav Volodin. **duma.gov.ru/**

New legislation that punishes organization, financing and recruitment for acts of sabotage with stiff sentences of up to life imprisonment was approved by Russia's State Duma in its first reading on Wednesday, state-owned news agency RIA reported.

The legislation, which supplements an existing law with three new articles, mandates severe punishments including life imprisonment for anyone forming a group for the purpose of commiting sabotage. Other offenses such aiding and abetting sabotage carry a punishment of between 10-20 years in prison and fines of up to 1 million rubles ($15,500).

“The punishment for saboteurs will be as severe as possible,” said State Duma Chairman Vyacheslav Volodin, a member of Russia’s ruling United Russia party and one of the bill's authors, along with the leaders of each of the other factions in the Duma and a total of 380 of the chamber's 450 total deputies.

"Given that the Russian Federation is conducting a special military operation and at the same

time accepts refugees and remains open to the entry and exit of foreign nationals, the adoption of the bill is a fundamentally important step necessary to protect our country," Volodin added.

Since Russia's invasion of Ukraine on Feb. 24, there have been regular reports of explosions at ammunition depots and damage caused to railway tracks, some of which the Russian authorities have blamed on saboteurs.

The reading is the first of the three required for legislation in the lower house of parliament before it advances to both the Federation Council and then the president for approval.

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