

Russian Traffic Police Force Returns Soviet-Era Name

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Soviet-era mosaic depicting a traffic policeman in the city of Tambov. **Anatoly Dushin (CC BY-SA 3.0)**

Russia's Main Directorate for Traffic Safety (GIBDD) has been renamed back to the Soviet-era State Automobile Inspectorate (GAI), the state-run TASS news agency [reported](#) Tuesday, citing the head of the traffic police force.

"We've now become the State Automobile Inspectorate," the agency head Mikhail Chernkiv said during an Interior Ministry meeting on Tuesday.

Soviet authorities first established the GAI in 1936. Russia's modern traffic police force maintained that name following the collapse of the U.S.S.R. until it was changed to the GIBDD in 1998.

During Tuesday's meeting, Chernkiv appeared to suggest that Russia's regular police force might also see a return to the Bolshevik-imposed name "militia" in place of the current Tsarist-era "police," which was [re-introduced](#) in 2010 as part of law enforcement reforms under ex-president Dmitry Medvedev.

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Chernikov said the traffic police name change had already taken effect, adding that all official documents now carry the GAI acronym.

Politicians in Russia had regularly suggested changing the name of the traffic police force after it became known as the GIBDD in the late 1990s.

Shortly after first assuming office in 2001, Russian President Vladimir Putin [said](#) he did not understand the reason for the renaming.

“There is this organization called GIBDD. It’s hard to pronounce, and I really don’t see why they changed it. No one can seem to explain it,” Putin said at the time.

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