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Russian Lawmakers Pass Bill Outlawing Desecration of Pro-War Symbols

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Letters symbolizing Russia's "special military operation" outside the U.S. Embassy in Moscow.
Alexander Avilov / Moskva News Agency

Russia's State Duma passed a bill Wednesday introducing prison terms of up to five years for desecrating symbols of support for Moscow's war against neighboring Ukraine.

Lawmakers proposed the amendments in the summer, citing what they called a rise in vandalism targeting buildings and vehicles displaying "visual information" promoting the war effort.

Members of the lower-house of parliament pointed to Interior Ministry data showing more than 60 arson attacks on military recruitment offices and other government buildings since 2022.

The amendments classify "political, ideological, racial, national or religious hatred or enmity toward any social group" as aggravating circumstances in cases of property damage. Those found guilty face up to five years in prison and five years of correctional labor.

The bill passed its third and final reading in the State Duma with a 403-0 vote.

Current law imposes five-year prison terms for property damage caused by arson or explosions that result in death. Other cases of significant property damage carry sentences of up to two years.

The new bill will now go to the upper-house Federation Council for a single vote, after which President Vladimir Putin would need to sign it into law.

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