

The country's parliament voted to back a bill backed by Prime Minister Vladimir Putin's dominant United Russia party giving three judges the right to rule on cases involving terrorism, hostage-taking, armed insurrection, sabotage and civil disturbances.

The bill will go before Russia's upper house, the Federation Council where approval is expected to be a formality, before it becomes law.

The move came 15 years to the day since the adoption of Russia's first post-Soviet Constitution which reintroduced jury trials abolished by the Bolsheviks in 1917.

Critics said the move raised the spectre of a return to Soviet-style trials controlled solely by judges.

[More...](#)