

Shooting gallery owner given 3-year suspended sentence

A Chinese woman who ran a small recreational shooting gallery in north China's Tianjin Municipality has received a suspended three-year prison sentence for illegal gun possession.

The sentence was handed down by Tianjin No. 1 Intermediate People's Court.

Zhao Chunhua, 51, opened a roadside shooting gallery to help support her family but was arrested in October. Among the model guns seized from her stall, six were identified as real guns.

She was sentenced to three and a half years in prison for illegal gun possession by a district court in Tianjin in December last year, triggering a public outcry, with many calling the verdict harsh. It caused widespread debate about the criteria for legally defining guns.

The Intermediate People's Court took over the case after Zhao appealed against the initial verdict.

According to the court, Zhao knew that the model guns could cause injuries and could not be purchased through legal channels, therefore, she had the subjective intention to possess them.

Given that Zhao showed remorse and the guns she owned were for recreational shooting, posing little threat to society, Zhao was given a three-year probation.

Zhao pleaded guilty and was immediately released.