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Governor Sympathizes With Dead Conscript's Mom

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Alma Bukharbayeva holding a sign condemning Omsk Governor Leonid Polezhayev at an earlier protest.

Omsk Governor Leonid Polezhayev said he no longer believed that a mother who had blamed him for her son's murky death was guilty of defamation Thursday, two days after he won a defamation lawsuit in court.

Polezhayev had sued Alma Bukharbayeva for carrying a sign reading "Putin, Polezhayev are killers of our children" at a June rally. He won the defamation case Tuesday, but he said Thursday that he would drop the claim.

"I understand that in the eyes of the mother, the fault in her son's death lies within the state, which, in the Omsk region, is embodied for her by Polezhayev," Polezhayev said in a statement carried by Interfax.

But he did not accept responsibility for the death of the 18-year-old conscript.

Authorities say Bukharbayeva's son committed suicide, but the mother fears that he was

killed for his vital organs. She said there were no marks on his neck to support claims that he hanged himself, and demanded an explanation for why his vital organs were missing.

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