

6-Year-Old Boy Is Killed by Falling Ice in St. Petersburg

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ST. PETERSBURG — Falling ice killed a 6-year-old St. Petersburg boy on Thursday, days after three children were injured in similar incidents, city investigators said.

The boy was walking with his grandmother in St. Petersburg when the ice plummeted from a rooftop. He died 30 minutes later in the hospital. He was named by Channel One television as Ivan Zavyalov.

"We heard a big bang, then a girl's shout for help," a passer-by, Irina Nikonorova, told NTV television. "The boy's face was all bloody."

Investigators are examining if the building's owner was negligent in failing to clear the roof.

Dozens of people are killed every year by ice crashing down from overhanging roofs and awnings, a phenomenon that the country appears helpless to address.

Some people have resorted to walking in the road, especially along the narrower lanes, to

minimize the risk. Pavements are often cordoned off as workmen hack down ice deemed too dangerous to walk under. The often-spectacular formations, which can grow meters long, smash into the ground with brutal force.

Fluctuating temperatures and heavy snowfall have made the problem particularly bad this year, as melting snow drips over the edge of rooftops and refreezes.

On Monday, two children and a baby were hurt in separate similar incidents in St. Petersburg. The children, aged 11 and 10, were hospitalized, one in critical condition. The baby suffered a broken nose.

A 22-year-old student hit by ice last year remains in serious condition in the hospital after coming out of a nine-month coma in November.

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