

Hospital Deaths of 8 Babies Investigated

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The  Moscow Times

Police are investigating whether the deaths of eight newborn babies in a North Caucasus hospital during the first 10 days of January were caused by frequent power outages, news reports said Saturday.

The eight infants were linked up to artificial respiration units in the hospital in Nalchik, the capital of Kabardino-Balkaria.

The LifeNews.ru site said the hospital saw frequent outages during the first half of January.

"When there were blackouts, nurses and doctors were pumping oxygen manually. ... And the next day there was a power outage again. Then we learned that our baby died," the mother of one of the babies told the web site.

Investigators have opened a criminal inquiry into "negligence that resulted in the death of two or more people." It is also investigating the local power supplier.

Kabardino-Balkaria health officials denied that the deaths were caused by the negligence of doctors.

According to a World Health Organization study, almost 99 percent of newborn or neonatal deaths — those in the first four weeks of life — occur in the developing world.

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