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Anti-Pedophile Group Calls for Criminal Probe of Astakhov

By The Moscow Times

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Sergei Zhuk, the leader of the Bounty Hunters movement against pedophiles, has called on the Prosecutor General's Office to investigate children's ombudsman Pavel Astakhov, a news report said Wednesday.

In his complaint, Zhuk asks investigators to open a criminal case against Astakhov on seven different charges, Izvestia reported.

The charges include negligence, abuse of office, inciting hatred or animosity, deliberately providing misleading or inaccurate information, slander, illegal access to computer information, and the creation, use and distribution of harmful computer programs.

The final charge refers to the group's accusation that Astakhov orchestrated a cyber attack against a website collecting signatures for his resignation, Lenta.ru reported.

Zhuk's complaint against Astakhov is not the first and likely comes as no surprise to anyone familiar with the ongoing spat between the children's ombudsman and the Bounty Hunters, who are known for for their campaign against child pornography and pedophilia on the Internet.

Earlier, Zhuk accused Astakhov of incompetency and self-advertising, and Astakhov had slander charges filed against Zhuk in response.

The Bounty Hunters slammed Astakhov for his handling of two high-profile cases involving Russian children.

In their opinion, Astakhov wrongly supported the head of the Russian Mothers movement, Irina Bergset, who accused her former Swedish husband of pedophilia and later supported the government ban on U.S. adoptions.

The group also blasted Astakhov for his reaction to the January death of Maxim Kuzmin, an adopted Russian child living in the U.S. The ombudsman was quick to blame the boy's foster parents for his death, the group says, although the death was later deemed an accident.

In June 2012 the Bounty Hunters movement asked police to block the social network VKontakte for allegedly providing their users with links to pornographic content.

In response, the site's founder, Pavel Durov, called the Bounty Hunters a "fascist-like organization," Lenta.ru said.

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