

U.S. 'Tried to Use' Deceased Russian Kids as Organ Donors

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The Foreign Ministry said organs from adopted Russian children who died in the U.S. may have been used in transplants, a news report said Monday.

Responding to an inquiry initiated by State Duma Deputy Alexander Starovoitov, Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov said in a letter obtained by Izvestia that Russian agencies in the U.S. "have information based on local media reports about two incidents of the possible use of deceased Russian children's organs for transplantation," Izvestia reported.

According to the Foreign Ministry, U.S. authorities attempted to use the organs of 6-year-old Alexei Geiko in 2003 and Ilya Kargyntsev, age unknown, in 2005.

Ryabkov said Russia may not be aware of all such cases due to a lack of official U.S. statistics on the use of children as organ donors.

He also noted that "the rules for obtaining consent for transplants are gradually being simplified" in the U.S.

In many states the procedure is based on the Uniform Anatomical Gift Act of 1987, which authorizes the taking of organs for transplantation even without the patient's or a relative's consent provided that "sufficient efforts to reveal possible objections have been taken."

Russian deputies began discussing the issue of organ donation in December 2012 during the debate on passing the "Dima Yakovlev law," which banned adoptions of Russian orphans by U.S. families.

Some deputies cited the use of adopted Russian children's organs in transplants as the main reason for adopting the law, although they were unable to support their argument with official data.

Ryabkov's letter comes in response to an inquiry that Liberal Democratic Party Deputy Alexander Starovoitov sent to Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov in February asking him to provide all available information on the issue.

Commenting on the Foreign Ministry's reaction, Starovoitov said Russian children in the U.S. need additional protection to prevent them from being used as "material for organ transplantation," Izvestia reported.

The Foreign Ministry's press service declined to comment on Ryabkov's response, but said the Russian diplomatic service continues to monitor the situation with Russian children in the U.S.

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