

Child Rape Case Has Siberians Calling for 'Impalement'

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Reports of a brutal rape of a four-year-old girl in the Siberian city of Yakutsk set off a storm of public outrage, with locals staging a rare unsanctioned rally, calling for "impalement" and rushing to sign a petition to reinstate the death penalty for child abusers.

Hundreds gathered downtown on Wednesday, demanding justice and waving photographs of the young girl, a neighbor of the primary suspect, local media said.

The crowd chanted, "Impale [him]!" and accused police of mishandling the investigation by releasing two people claimed to have been present during the rape, which took place last Sunday, federal television NTV reported, adding that many protesters were drunk.

Those two people, purported drinking buddies of the primary suspect, were taken out of town and beaten by unidentified assailants, but then released, media reported. The mob broke windows in a house owned by one of them and stuck a sign on it reading, "a pedophile lives

here," local news website NVpress.ru said.

Reports also spoke about a "siege" and a "storming" of the local branch of the Investigative Committee, though the law enforcement agency denied those claims in a statement later the same day.

The committee added that the rape occurred in the suspect's apartment after he had left a neighbor's apartment where the drinking session took place.

A Yakutsk resident recently released from prison was detained Monday over the rape, the committee said. The Komsomolskaya Pravda newspaper said the girl was hospitalized over the injuries, and her reproductive organs were removed.

The two purported drinking buddies denied involvement in the crime and were released after questioning, investigators said.

Locals flocked to sign an online petition calling for an exception to Russia's blanket moratorium on the death penalty to be made for sexual offenders who attack children under 12 years of age. Signatories included Yakutsk Mayor Aisen Nikolayev, who publicly announced the petition on Ekho Mosvky radio.

The petition, available on OnlinePetition.ru, had almost 40,000 signatures as of Wednesday evening, with the majority of the 16,000 most recent ones coming from Yakutia, according to information provided by the signatories. The Kremlin has said it wants every public petition that gathers more than 100,000 signatures to be formally reviewed by the federal legislature.

A limited reinstatement of the death penalty was also supported by Russian federal senator Valentina Petrenko, but two senior lawmakers in the lower house of the Russian parliament said such reinstatement was unlikely.

Russia introduced a moratorium on the death penalty in 1997, but did not formally remove it from national legislation.

Last year, the country introduced chemical castration for repeat child abusers, though the punishment is reversible and cannot be administered without the offender's consent.

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