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Only 'One of 33 Orphans' Denied U.S. Adoption Finds Russian Home

By The Moscow Times

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About 60,000 Russian children have been adopted by U.S. parents since the fall of the Soviet Union, but the new law is seeing further strain on orphanages in Russia as homeless children number an estimated 650,000.. **Luke Hoersten**

Out of the 33 St. Petersburg orphans who were set to be given new homes by U.S. families last year before their moves were blocked by Russian legislation, only one has been legally adopted by Russian parents, a news report said.

The 33 children already had potential American families, but were prevented from going to the U.S. when a ban on the adoption of Russian children by Americans came into effect on Jan. 1.

One of the 33 children was adopted by a family from St. Petersburg, while another was taken in by a British family. Three of them are now living with guardians, one is with a foster family, and another minor was returned to his biological family, the St. Petersburg social affairs

committee told Rosbalt Tuesday. The report didn't clarify the status of the remaining 26 orphans.

Currently, there are 13,660 orphans in St. Petersburg, out of whom 10,162 are staying with foster families, 5,152 with guardians, 1,366 with guardians but under a foster family agreement, and 3,644 with adoptive families.

There are 3,498 children in orphanages, out of whom 2,529 are in educational institutions, 717 are in medical organizations, and 252 are with social services.

There are 2,696 orphans under 18 years of age who have the right and are ready to be adopted.

Svetlana Agapitova, St. Petersburg's children's rights ombudsman, in January asked the Education and Science Ministry to clarify the 33 adoptees' situation. However, she had to wait until May to get a reply, in which the ministry said that there would be no exception to the adoption law, even though the children had already met their prospective U.S. parents.

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