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Lawmaker Blames Zhirinovsky Rape Rant Against Pregnant Woman on Medication

By Anna Dolgov

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Vladimir Zhirinovsky, leader of the Liberal Democratic Party, or LDPR.

Liberal Democratic Party leader Vladimir Zhirinovsky's recent tirade against a pregnant journalist can be attributed to the side effects of melatonin-based medication prescribed by a Kremlin clinic, a member of his party said.

Deputy chief of the LDPR parliamentary faction Alexei Didenko sent the presidential human rights council a letter blaming the onslaught on prescription medication, Novaya Gazeta reported Monday.

The side effects of the drug, sold in Russia under the name Tsirkadin, include "irritability, excitability, fatigue" and "aggressive behavior," said the letter, a copy of which was published Monday by Novaya Gazeta.

According to the pharmacological description, the drug's active ingredient is melatonin — a hormone used in many countries to regulate sleep and wake cycles.

The human rights panel is considering bringing criminal charges against the LDPR head for his verbal assault against RT correspondent, Stella Dubovitskaya, during which he suggested that his entourage rape the pregnant reporter and ordered his aide to "kiss" female journalists.

In his letter to the rights panel's chief Mikhail Fedotov, Didenko said they "should have more closely and exhaustively researched the reasons for the unusual behavior of a person, and should have shown due attentiveness and tact in this matter."

The move to blame the outburst on the drug has prompted ridicule on Russian social networks, with some users commenting on the name of the medicine, which, in Russian, sounds like "tsirk odin," meaning "what a circus."

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