

Probe Into Murder of Russian Toddler Not Over Despite Suspect's Suicide

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Investigators vowed Tuesday to continue a probe into the murder of a 3-year-old Tomsk girl despite the suicide of the main suspect.

Cautioning against "premature" conclusions, Investigative Committee spokesman Vladimir Markin said in a statement that the case would be transferred to the committee's Moscow branch.

Investigators will "scrupulously study" the circumstances of the crime and also "bring to criminal liability employees of the kindergarten [where the girl was abducted from] for negligence," the statement said.

Markin's comments came shortly after Vladimir Litvinenko, head of the committee's Tomsk branch, announced to journalists that the main suspect had committed suicide, Newsru.com reported.

Markin said investigators in Moscow would also evaluate the work of their counterparts

in Tomsk, who had been searching for a suspect in the abduction of Vika Vylegzhanina since Aug. 14.

Vylegzhanina was snatched from a kindergarten playground on Aug. 14 and found dead five days later in an abandoned cellar on the outskirts of the city. Medical examiners determined that the girl had been raped.

Tomsk investigators announced the detention of a suspect on Aug. 21. On Tuesday, however, Litvinenko announced that the initial suspect had not been involved in the crime and had been released, and that the real suspect — a convicted rapist — had actually been found dead on Aug. 22, having hanged himself, according to Newsru.com.

Litvinenko said the suspect's guilt was proven thanks to DNA testing and forensic evidence that tied him to the scene of the crime.

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