

Russian Watchdog Shuts Down 5,000 Websites That Promote Suicide

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A recent survey by the World Health Organization shows Russia continues to experience particularly high levels of suicide.

Russia's consumer protection watchdog said Monday it has shut down almost 5,000 websites found to promote suicide since the introduction of a law allowing the agency to do so without a court order.

Speaking ahead of World Suicide Prevention Day on Wednesday, a spokesman for the Federal Consumer Protection Service, or Rospotrebnadzor, told the Interfax news agency that it had examined 5,015 sites since November 2012, of which it had shut down 4,872.

In accordance with legislation passed in November 2012, the agency does not need a court order to shut down websites that are found to promote suicide or drug use.

Data published last week by the World Health Organization (WHO) said Russia continues to experience particularly high levels of suicide, far above the global average of one suicide per 40 seconds.

In 2012, when the most recent data was collected, almost 32,000 people were reported to have killed themselves in Russia — an average of 19.5 people deaths per every 100,000 people.

According to the WHO study, the countries that displayed the highest suicide rates were Guyana (44.2 people per 100,000), followed by North and South Korea (38.5 and 28.9, respectively.)

At the other end of the spectrum, Kuwait and Lebanon recorded a score of just 0.9 suicides per 100,000 people.

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