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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Dead Dogs Found Across Russia After Pup-Poisoning Campaign Announced

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After animal rights activists sounded the alarm over what was expected to be a nationwide campaign by "dog hunters" to poison stray dogs, reports have flooded in of dead dogs turning up in various cities.

A warning about the anticipated Jan. 20 campaign had made waves on social media sites, but many treated it as a rumor, since no source for the news was authoritatively determined and the reports were widely considered to be unsubstantiated.

On Wednesday, however, various regional news agencies reported a spate of dog poisonings. Yekaterinburg, Chelyabinsk, Nizhny Novgorod, Murmansk, Yaroslavl, St. Petersburg and Vladivostok are among the cities where poisoned dogs have been found, according to local media reports.

Regional news site TagilCity.ru reported that one dog had been seen dying in a courtyard in the Ural Mountain city of Nizhny Tagil.

"We saw her at 9 in the morning, but thought that she was playing and just stumbling around.

Then an hour later we looked and she was having convulsions," a resident was cited as saying.

Animal rights activists in Yekaterinburg reported similar incidents on the "Anti-Dog Hunters" page of the popular social network VKontakte.

Vladivostok's local news site VladNews.ru cited residents of that city as saying they'd seen numerous dead dogs throughout the city on Wednesday, as well as some dogs still suffering the effects of the chemical that dog hunters use to poison the animals.

Despite efforts by animal rights activists to call attention to the dangers of vigilante dog hunters in recent years, an underground community seeking to kill off stray dogs in areas with little to no animal control continues to thrive.

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