The Moscow Times
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Store Manager Charged Over Death of Pensioner Accused of Shoplifting

February 13, 2015



A store manager who accused an 81-year-old woman of stealing butter — only for the pensioner to later die in police custody — has been charged with causing her death through negligence, Russian media reported Friday.

The elderly customer, a survivor of the Siege of Leningrad during World War II, reportedly suffered a heart attack in a police holding cell after store workers accused her of trying to steal three packs of butter from a Magnit store on the outskirts of St. Petersburg earlier this month.

Olga Konyukhova, the store manager, has been charged with arbitrariness and causing death through negligence after failing to properly execute her official duties, Investigative Committee head Vladimir Markin said Friday, the RIA Novosti news agency reported.

Markin did not rule out that further charges could be brought against Konyukhova, adding that she had failed to take into account the pensioner's age and that she had caused the incident to escalate by refusing to allow the woman to pay for the butter after the accusations were made.

After CCTV footage of the incident was released, local prosecutors cleared the pensioner of having committed any crime, saying she might not have seen the items lying under her bag when she was standing at the cash register, Russian News Service reported.

Original url:
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