The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Russian Paramedics Caught Beating Incapacitated Patient (Video)

By Peter Spinella

March 04, 2015



A team of paramedics caught on video beating an incapacitated patient and dragging him along a city sidewalk outside of a St. Petersburg apartment building have been fired and face criminal charges, Russian media reported Wednesday.

A surveillance video, reportedly posted online by a family member, featured two paramedics — one male, the other female — carrying the patient by his arms and legs to a waiting ambulance.

The paramedics, apparently struggling to maintain their grip on his limbs, dropped the patient on the sidewalk several times while attempting to transport his limp body from the building to the waiting ambulance.

They then shoved the patient into the waiting vehicle, ultimately shoehorning him to fit

into what appeared to be a space too small for his body.

The patient was later found to have had a blood clot in his brain and is currently in a coma, online newspaper Gazeta.ru reported.

The incident provoked a massive outcry among Russian-speaking netizens.

The Investigative Committee and the Health Ministry are each probing the incident separately.

Health Minister Veronika Skvortsova has ordered the Federal Health and Social Development Inspection Service to conduct an inquiry into the quality of medical care offered by paramedics in Russia, state news agency RIA Novosti reported, citing the ministry's press service.

Sergei Kapitonov, an assistant to the head of the Investigative Committee's St. Petersburg branch, told Gazeta.ru on Wednesday that a criminal case has been launched over the paramedics' "failure to help a patient."

Both paramedics have been fired, state news agency TASS reported Wednesday.

A doctor at a state hospital told The Moscow Times that such ambulance workers in Moscow usually make only 20,000 rubles ($330) a month despite the stress of the job and years of training required. For comparison, Gazeta.ru reported on Tuesday that the average salary across Russia is 31,200 rubles.

The incident drew parallels to the 2013 beating of a heart surgery patient who later died in the Siberian city of Perm. A video posted online showed a physician pounding on his patient's chest in what the physician later described as an outburst brought on by long working hours and stress.

The physician, identified as Andrei Votyakov, was sentenced last year to five months of community service and a 100,000 ruble fine, news site Lenta.ru reported.

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