

Moscow Metro Chief Says There Won't Be Any 'Women Only' Wagons

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A woman on the Moscow metro stands near a sign reading: "Do not lean on the door."

The head of the Moscow metro has dismissed a proposal from a Russian senator to create "special wagons" for pregnant women and women with children in order to shelter them from the crowds, a news report said Thursday.

"How would we do that? Create a 'yellow zone' on the platform, have security officials stand guard there? For them to chase away everyone who is not a woman or a child? ... This is not a long distance train where tickets are checked and people grouped," metro chief Dmitry Pegov told Lenta.ru.

Pegov was reacting to a proposal from Federation Council member Vadim Tyulpanov, who in a letter to Russian Transport Minister Maxim Sokolov and the heads of the Moscow and St. Petersburg undergrounds, had asked for "special wagons" to be provided for pregnant women, women with children, the disabled and the elderly, the Izvestia daily reported

Wednesday.

Tyulpanov said that as a regular metro commuter he had often witnessed how mothers became the victim of the busy metro system — on which 9 million and 2,3 million commuters travel every day in Moscow and St. Petersburg, respectively.

"I have seen during peak hours how mothers with young children try to get into a wagon, with children in tears from being squashed, and some don't even make their way inside," he told Izvestia.

Tyulpanov said that many developed countries with high living standards already offered "special wagons," for women, citing Japan as an example.

In Tokyo, "Ladies Only" wagons in public transport have been introduced to shield women from the straying hands of Japanese men, also known as "subway gropers." China, South Korea, India and Brazil offer similar gender segregated wagons to protect women from sexual assault.

British Transport Minister Claire Perry also said last year she was considering the option as a way of enhancing public safety for women.

"How terrifying to be traveling home in a place where I should reasonably expect to be safe and to be the victim of a sexual crime," she said, the Birmingham Mail reported.

In the Izvestia report, however, Tyulpanov made no mention of wanting separate wagons to protect women from gender crimes.

Olga Alimov, a member of the Duma Committee on Family, Women and Children, told Izvestia that she supported Tyulpanov's idea but said that its success depended on Russians' willingness to abide by the rules.

"Men don't always realize they should give up their seats to women with children. We'll have to educate them, because if they see a half-empty [women's] wagon, who will abide by the rules? The idea is a good one, but a lot of time could pass until it is actually implemented," she said.

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