The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Russian Official Defends 'Shriveled 27-Year-Old Women' Comments

May 15, 2015



Pavel Astakhov

Russia's children's ombudsman once again sparked a scandal this week when he defended the right of older men to marry teen brides, saying some women were “shriveled” by the age of 27.

Pavel Astakhov was adding his voice to a debate on teen marriage that has rumbled this week after reports that a married local police chief in his forties or fifties in Russia's North Caucasus republic of Chechnya was to take a 17-year-old schoolgirl as his second wife.

“Emancipation and sexual maturity come earlier in the Caucasus, let's not be hypocritical. There are places where women are already shriveled by the age of 27, and look about 50 to us,” Astakhov told Russian News Service radio on Thursday.

The next day, the children's ombudsman hastened to make clear his feelings about women.

“Women of any age are wonderful and delightful,” Astakhov wrote on his Instagram page.

Женщины любого возраста прекрасны и восхитительны. Господь Бог создал Женщин, чтобы мы могли их любить, защищать, беречь, воспевать. Неловкое сравнение, опромотчивое слово, вырванное из контекста рассуждений не могут изменить мое отношение к Прекрасному Полу. Любил, люблю, буду любить и уважать! Приношу свои извинения за допущенную ошибку!

A photo posted by Павел Астахов (@rfdeti) on May 14, 2015 at 11:13pm PDT

“The Lord God created Women so we could love them, protect them, look after them and sing their praises. An awkward comparison, an ill-considered word taken out of context cannot change my attitude to the Fairer Sex,” he wrote.

Astakhov, a qualified lawyer, has previously courted controversy by supporting the

introduction of a law banning the adoption of Russian orphans by U.S. parents. He has also said that Russian literature offers the only sex education that teenagers need. Sex education classes are not currently taught in Russian schools.

Reports of an upcoming bigamous marriage between the Chechen policeman and schoolgirl three times younger than him have dominated Russian headlines this week after the Novaya Gazeta newspaper said the girl and her family were being forced to agree to the marriage by the aging suitor.

Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov expressed anger that the story had been picked up by nationwide media and dismissed the republic's media and information minister for mismanaging the scandal.

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