

Siberians Rally Behind Bear That Mauled Young Woman

July 07, 2015



Concerned citizens have launched an online petition pleading with authorities of Siberia's Tomsk region to spare the life of a bear that mauled a 24-year-old woman in a local cafe Sunday.

Cafe owners kept two bears in a cage — an attraction to draw diners in. Early Sunday morning the woman approached the cage to get a closer look at the beasts when one of them attacked, tearing her arm off, regional news site Tomsk.ru reported Monday.

The petition, launched via the Change.org website, charged that the young woman had provoked the bear by breaking the rules and climbing the fence surrounding its enclosure, thereby getting too close for comfort with the animals.

By the time of publication Tuesday, upward of 34,500 people had signed the petition, which was addressed to Sergei Zhvachkin, governor of Tomsk region.

“We appeal to the common sense and humanism of the petition's addressees [to save the animal],” the petition concluded.

Local police and animal control authorities then announced the launch of an investigation into the incident.

Original url:

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