

Russian Officials Bicker as Child Killer Suspect Hospitalized

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A man suspected of killing his six children, his pregnant wife and his mother was in the hospital Wednesday in the Vladimir region after being injured during his arrest, Russia's TASS news agency reported.

The discovery of human body parts in an apartment in the city of Nizhny Novgorod sparked a massive manhunt for Oleg Belov, father of the dead children, who was cornered by police on Tuesday evening near the home of his mother-in-law east of Moscow.

“He is in intensive care after an operation ... his condition is stable,” a spokesman for the hospital in the town of Kovrov told TASS on Wednesday. Belov will be transferred to Nizhny Novgorod on Wednesday, tabloid website LifeNews reported.

Belov's arrest sparked a blame game among top Russian officials, as a senior welfare official in Nizhny Novgorod was arrested and Russia's children's rights ombudsman appeared to call for the death penalty.

Police shot Belov in the stomach during his arrest, the NTV television channel reported Wednesday, broadcasting photographs of Belov lying on the ground with blood all over his face.

Belov, 52, was armed with a knife and behaved aggressively when confronted by law enforcement officers, the state-owned Channel One television channel reported.

Police reportedly believe Belov planned the massacre carefully. On July 25, the man picked up his children — aged between 1 and 7 — from kindergarten, saying that he was taking them for a vacation.

Their dismembered remains, along with those of Belov's wife, Yulia Belova, were found in the family's apartment when police entered it nine days later on Aug. 4.

Belov's mother's body was found at a property in the city of Vladimir, about 220 kilometers from Nizhny Novgorod, Russia's Investigative Committee said in a statement Wednesday. Her corpse was reportedly found in a freshly dug hole in the ground.

Belov had a history of violence, was known to local social workers and had been diagnosed with schizophrenia, according to his mother-in-law Valentina Zaitseva, TASS reported Tuesday. Media reports speculated that he had been planning to kill his mother-in-law when he was detained.

He was also facing a court hearing initiated by his wife that was to consider whether to deprive him of his parental rights, the Gazeta.ru website reported.

A negligence case has been opened in regard to the head of Nizhny Novgorod's education and children's protection department, Igor Kryuchkov, according to the Investigative Committee.

Pavel Astakhov, Russia's children's ombudsman, expressed satisfaction over Belov's arrest Wednesday, apparently convinced of the man's guilt, and floated the idea of putting him to death.

“A bloody executioner has been disarmed. Does the state need his life?” Astakhov wrote on social media site Instagram alongside a photograph of Belov.

But Astakhov was criticized by Investigative Committee spokesman Vladimir Markin in a statement Wednesday for his outspoken comments and for announcing the day before that he was taking the investigation into the killings under his personal control.

“It's clear that this is not their subject or their responsibility. And 'control' was needed when those little kids were still alive,” Markin said.

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