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Families Up in Arms Over Spate of Body Switchings at Russian Morgues

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Investigators in northern Russia are looking into complaints that a morgue has been mixing up bodies, presenting mourners who came to bury their loved ones with coffins carrying complete strangers, a news report said.

The investigation in the town of Sortaval in the Karelia region follows at least two alleged incidents, the latest of which supposedly occurred on Thursday, news portal Flash Nord reported.

On that day, mourners who came to bury a deceased family member "were surprised when morgue employees brought into the funeral home the body of a different person," the report said.

The woman who was supposed to have been buried Thursday had been buried a day earlier by a different family, Flash Nord reported.

The other family had also expressed doubts about the identity of the person lying in the coffin, but morgue employees persuaded them that the deceased was indeed their family member, blogger Yury Kryukov wrote on the Flash Nord website.

"It's the right deceased, the right one, don't worry," he quoted morgue employees as telling the mourners. "It's just that death changes a person's appearance. Sometimes making them unrecognizable."

Morgue chief Vasily Skamyanov said the mix-up happened because the both dead women had been living in the same nursing home and when they were brought to the morgue, the "documents got mixed up," Ptzgovorit.ru news portal reported.

A similar incident allegedly occurred last week in the Volga city of Nizhny Novgorod, local news portal Vremyan.ru reported.

Three women were scheduled to be buried at around the same time, and a local morgue mixed up the bodies during preparations for the funerals, the report said. The error was revealed when mourners refused to recognize the people lying in the coffins as their loved ones, Vremyan.ru reported.

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