

News Report Ridicules Russian Media Law on Suicide

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A regional news portal has poked fun at a Russian law prohibiting online content found to promote suicide in a report about the attempt of a teenage girl to kill herself.

The article, titled “In Saratov after a quarrel with her parents a student did something for certain reasons,” was published Monday by the Rodnoi Gorod (Native City) news portal and promised to report “all the details” of the incident.

“After a quarrel with her parents, an 11th-grader committed an action that may not be disclosed under Article 15 of the law on information, which bans media from publishing information on the methods of committing suicide, as well as appeals to commit suicide,” the article said.

The report was illustrated by a picture of a question mark against a black background.

Proceeding with its apparently tongue-in-cheek account, Rodnoi Gorod reported that the

same law banned it from disclosing the “reasons for the occurrence,” adding that the past weekend had seen “other developments, whose content also cannot be disclosed under Article 15 of the law on information.”

A controversial Russian law enacted in 2012 prohibits online content advocating suicide and drug use. Any website in violation can be blocked by the government.

Russian social media users responded to the Saratov news report with a flurry of snappy remarks.

“Today’s funniest news is about suicide,” one commenter wrote on a Russian-language page of the Reddit website.

Others lamented Russia’s restrictions on media coverage and its political implications.

“I thought such ‘news’ could only be found on the pages of dystopian novels, but this is how it turns out to be,” a Reddit user said.

“Finally, the authorities have solved the problem of suicides!” one reader said in a sarcastic comment on the website of the Ekho Moskvyy radio station.

Parodying the typical opening lines of Soviet-era obituaries, another Ekho Moskvyy reader said: “I can’t wait to read: ‘[President] Vladimir Putin, after a lengthy, protracted something, has somehow, but for good.’”

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