

Second Tiger Cub Dies in Crimea Zoo After Blackout

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A second rare tiger cub has died in a zoo in Crimea, but the zoo's director has dismissed concerns the death was caused by a blackout that has plunged the peninsula into an energy crisis, the TASS news agency reported Sunday.

The cub was the second to die at the Skazka zoo in the coastal town of Yalta on Crimea's southern shores after its sibling died of hypothermia there on Friday. The zoo's director has dismissed reports that the deaths were related.

"It's difficult to say whether it was due to hypothermia," Oleg Zubkov was cited as telling TASS. "Bengal tigers are generally very weak by nature, on top of that these were being artificially fed," he said.

Three of the cubs born in September were rejected by their mother Tigryula — a tiger donated to the zoo by then-Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko in 2009.

The cubs had been on a special feeding regime and had been vulnerable, Zubkov said.

Crimea has been suffering electricity shortages after Ukrainian activists blew up the existing power lines from Ukraine about two weeks ago.

Zubkov said veterinarians would establish the cause of death following an autopsy on Monday, the report said.

The director said that the zoo was being heated by two generators, one of which broke last week. Authorities were planning on providing another generator “in the near future,” the report said.

Crimean Prosecutor General Natalya Poklonskaya earlier said the zoo director was responsible for the death of the first tiger cub.

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