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Fatal 16-Hour Traffic Jam on Russian Highway Sparks Criminal Investigation

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The Orenburg region branch of Russia's Investigative Committee has opened a criminal investigation after a man died on a local highway on Jan. 3, when dozens of drivers were trapped in a traffic jam for more than 16 hours amid heavy snowfall, the Kommersant newspaper reported Tuesday, citing the Committee's online statement.

“After an inspection into officials fulfilling their duties while dealing with an emergency, a criminal case has been opened under Section 2 of Article No. 293 of Russia's Criminal Code [that outlines] negligence resulting in a death,” the statement said.

The deceased was one of the drivers stuck in the traffic jam and was waiting for assistance from the Emergency Situations Ministry. He tried to walk to other vehicles, but got lost due to low visibility and froze to death near the road, Kommersant reported.

The Orenburg region is 1,400 kilometers southeast of Moscow.

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