

Russia Media Watchdog Silent on Claims Disabled People Should 'Die at Once'

April 18, 2016



Russian media watchdog Rospotrebnadzor has refused to comment after a mainstream news website posted an article that claimed that disabled people are "defective specimens," and advised them to "die at once."

The watchdog remained silent on the scandal while releasing new media guidelines on Monday, where it focused on suggestions that media outlets should avoid using the word "suicide" in headlines and on front pages.

They also recommend that reporters "should refrain from reporting personal details, especially when it comes to teenage and youth suicides."

The Komsomolskaya Pravda news website published the controversial article on Thursday, sparking outrage among readers. It was later deleted.

In the column, editor-in-chief of the Komsomolskaya Pravda radio station, Yevgeny Arsyukhin, criticized famous Australian publisher and preacher Nick Vujicic, who was born with no arms and legs, arguing that "disabled people should not be allowed to the top of the

social pyramid."

More than 32,000 people have backed an online petition on activist website Change.org to fire Arsyukhin over his column. The petition, which was launched by Federal Youth Agency spokeswoman Kristina Potupchik, also demands an apology from the Komsomolskaya Pravda editor-in-chief Vladimir Sungorkin.

Sungorkin has so far refused to apologize, saying that Arsyukhin is a professional who wants to provoke readers and challenge "freedom of expression," the Meduza news agency reported.

Arsyukhin also said that he was not going to apologize, adding that the "article was difficult, perhaps too complicated for an online audience," Meduza reported Monday.

Original url:

<https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2016/04/18/russia-media-watchdog-silent-on-claims-disabled-people-should-die-at-once-a52572>