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Russian Media Watchdog Blocks Pro-Suicide Social Network Pages

By The Moscow Times

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Russian communications watchdog Roskomnadzor has blacklisted eight groups on the social network Vkontakte for allegedly promoting suicide.

The organization is currently analyzing another three groups, the agency said in a statement posted on Facebook Tuesday.

Agency chief Alexander Zharov said that the online administrators of communities pushing subscribers to suicide had been identified by both other users and journalists. The information has been forward to the digital crime department in Russia's Interior Ministry.

“I am sure that the joint work of users, the social network's administration, Roskomnadzor and the competent authorities will have a positive result. Such people must be identified and punished,” Zharov said.

The agency has not disclosed the names of the blocked Vkontakte communities.

On May 16, the Novaya Gazeta newspaper published an article about private Vkontakte groups driving young people to suicide. The groups led to the deaths of 130 minors between November 2015 and April 2016, the report claimed.

The article has drawn widespread public attention, as well as interest from officials.

Roskomnadzor and consumer rights watchdog Rospotrebnadzor have both reported launching checks into Novaya Gazeta's data.

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