

Russian Official Arrested for Negligence After Karelian Boat Tragedy

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Investigative Committee spokesman Vladimir Markin

The head of Karelia's consumer rights watchdog has been arrested following a boating accident which resulted in the deaths of 14 children, the Investigative Committee reported Tuesday.

Anatoliy Kovalenko is one of a number of Russian officials being investigated for negligence.

Inspectors were aware of poor conditions at the Samozero summer camp in Russia's northern republic of Karelia, but did not take any action against managers, according to Investigative Committee representative Vladimir Markin.

A group of 47 children from the camp, aged between 12 and 17, were rafting on the Samozero Lake on June 18 when the party was hit by a sudden storm. The victims are believed to be from Moscow and under the age of 15.

Five people have been [arrested](#) following the incident, including the camp director. Media reports claim that instructors had ignored bad weather warnings and had neglected to notify local authorities of the trip.

Karelian officials found a number of health and safety violations when visiting the camp in 2015, but did not hold management responsible, Markin said. Inspectors found sanitary problems at the camp, as well as inadequately organized activities for the children.

“The camp should have had all activities suspended, or been shut down,” Markin said. “Instead, authorities granted them the necessary permits to hold summer activities for the children the following year.”

The private summer camp hosted 2,500 children each year, selling three-week packages for 30,000 rubles (\$450). The camp was also regularly used by Moscow authorities to provide trips for children in social care.

Reports have surfaced of dozens of legal claims filed against the camp last year, with parents complaining about poor conditions, lack of staff control, unprepared instructors, low child-adult ratios, misbehavior among the children and instructors and inadequate food and medical care.

The camp has been closed.

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