

Children's Ombudsman Astakhov Resigns After Public Outcry

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Russian President Vladimir Putin listens to his children's rights ombudsman Pavel Astakhov (R) during a meeting in the Novo-Ogaryovo residence outside Moscow. **Kremlin Press Service**

Russia's Children's Ombudsman Pavel Astakhov is to leave his post after a brief holiday, the TASS news agency reported Monday.

Astakhov had faced mounting public pressure to resign after asking a young survivor of a boating disaster, "how was your swim?". The [accident at a Karelian summer camp](#) had claimed the lives of 14 children.

"Pavel Astakhov is currently on holiday, but I can confirm that he will step down on his return. A presidential decree will then be signed [on the issue]," Kremlin Spokesman Dmitry Peskov told journalists Monday. He maintained that Astakhov was leaving his post "of his own accord."

An online petition calling for Astakhov's immediate dismissal had gathered more than 150 thousand signatures. Reports appeared last week claiming that Astrakhov had been fired,

which the Kremlin denied in a statement on Friday.

Pavel Astakhov has held his position as ombudsman for children's rights since 2009. He is known as one of the chief lobbyists behind the 2011 law banning the adoption of Russian children by foreigners and has previously caused controversy by speaking out against sex education classes in schools.

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