

Kremlin Hints at Suicide Censorship U-Turn

November 10, 2016

The  **Moscow Times**

Russia could see a censorship U-turn on strict laws which ban the media from discussing suicide.

Speaking in an [interview](#) with Russia's [Znak news site](#), Alexey Volin, Minister of [Telecom](#) and Mass Communications, hinted that guidelines which control reports on suicide cases could be relaxed. A number of [journalists](#) have claimed that current Kremlin guidelines act to [cover-up](#) the social problems which drive Russians to take their own [lives](#).

Some news outlets [refuse to write the word](#) “suicide” due to fears that they could [be](#) accused of promoting self-harm.

“Several changes [in](#) the law severely restrict journalists and their work,” Volin [told](#) Znak. “There is a problem with describing the act of suicide, [driving](#) reporters to write riddles such

as, “in the N region, a young woman committed something due to something else,” he said.

“Suicide is an extremely controversial issue. We often have disputes [with Russian media watchdog Rospotrebnadzor], but now that both parties have a real dialogue, fewer cases end up in court,” Volin said.

“It's understood that a report on a terminally ill man taking his own life, is not promoting suicide, but shows the failings of our healthcare system,” he said.

The issue of suicide has been under scrutiny in Russia after a number of terminally-ill cancer patients took their own lives in February 2015. Notes left by some of the deceased indicated that they were distressed by a lack of pain medication.

In July, Rospotrebnadzor released new guidelines for media outlets, asking them not to link suicides to external factors such as living conditions.

Original url:

<https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2016/11/10/kremlin-hints-at-suicide-censorship-u-turn-a56085>