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Founder of Online 'Blue Whale' Suicide Group Sentenced

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Svetlana Kholyavchuk / TASS / Interpress

The young Russian man behind an online suicide game called "Blue Whale" has been sentenced to three years and four months behind bars, a district court in Russia's Tyumen region ruled on Monday.

"Philipp Budeikin was found guilty of inciting two girls, 16 and 17, to commit suicide," the 72.ru online newspaper quoted the judge's aide Elvira Yakubova as saying.

Budeikin, also known by the moniker "Fox" was detained in November 2016 at his mother's apartment in the Moscow region.

In May 2017, he pleaded guilty to inciting the suicides of 15 teenagers throughout Russia, but investigators linked him to just two cases.

Budeikin previously said his victims were "biological waste" and that his suicide game was "cleansing society."

Related article: Suicide Watch: Why Russian Teens Are Killing Themselves

A year before, the Russian investigative newspaper Novaya Gazeta reported that more than 130 teenagers had fallen victim to the online phenomenon, which led to a formal investigation.

The online game that incites mostly young people to take their lives spans over 50 days until the victims are instructed to commit suicide to win the game.

The game's title "Blue Whale" is a reference to how whales sometimes purposefully wash ashore to die.

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