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Russian Children Are Dying in Faulty Playgrounds

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Pavel Smertin / TASS

Two Russian children have died this year and 13 more were injured as a result of faulty playground equipment, the Mediazona news site reported Friday.

A 13-year-old boy died in the southern Siberian republic of Tuva on Jan. 9 when football goalposts fell on him during a game of basketball, according to the report.

An 11-year-old girl in the Urals region of Perm was also killed by football goalposts on Aug. 15. She fell into a coma and died in a hospital a week later, Mediazona says. In both incidents, investigators opened criminal cases on charges of negligence leading to death.

Mediazona cites rights advocates as calling for new legislation that would hold the state responsible for the safety of schoolchildren in playgrounds and schoolyards.

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“The state should create a regulatory framework to ensure the safety of life and health of persons who are — albeit indirectly — under its control,” Zona Prava legal advocate Sergei Petryakov told the outlet.

Investigations into these and other injuries inflicted from goalposts, monkey bars or fences often hit a dead end because local and school officials shift the blame for malfunctions on each other, the news site says.

Spokesman Bulat Mukhamedzhanov argued the problem lies in the absence of civil servants who are specifically tasked with inspecting playground equipment.

“Investigators often cannot determine who owns the football goal posts, who should monitor their stability and ensure children's safety,” he told Mediazona.

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