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Russian Collection Agency Accused of Releasing Pornographic Pictures of Debtor's Daughter

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Donat Sorokin / TASS

Investigators have launched a criminal probe into child pornography in Russia's Far East after a collection agency reportedly posted doctored photographs of a debtor's underage daughter to make it look like she was performing a sex act.

The victim was distressed to find out that the lewd pictures had been posted on social media in an attempt to force her father to pay off a $280 loan to a microcredit firm, local television in the city of Khabarovsk reported Wednesday.

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"Your life will be unbearable," a message addressed to the daughter by collectors allegedly

read.

News reports into the photographs drew the attention of local authorities, who on Thursday announced an inquiry into the threats and the indecent photographs.

A criminal case was opened into the production and distribution of pornographic materials involving minors, the Investigative Committee's Khabarovsk branch, 8,500 kilometers east of Moscow, said Friday.

"Steps are being taken to locate the culprits and detain them," it said in an online statement, promising to deploy "the most experienced regional investigators and forensic investigative experts."

Investigators seized computers and documents in a raid on the offices of the microcredit company which provided the loan, the statement added.

According to the loan contract shared by the broadcaster GuberniaTV, the company can "cede its rights to third-party" collectors if the debtor fails to repay the loan.

Similar online intimidation tactics and the spread of false information were reported in a previous debt-collection case involving the same microcredit firm, the news channel said.

Russians owe illegal loan sharks close to 100 billion rubles ($1.5 billion) in a burgeoning and unregulated industry that boasts three times as many illicit microcredit companies as those that are regulated.

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