Russian Priest Who Adopted 70 Children Charged With Pedophilia

September 26, 2019

Father Nikolai meets President Vladimir Putin the 2012 opening of the Russian Center for Science and Culture in Bethlehem, Palestine. **Kremlin.ru**

A celebrated Russian priest who adopted 70 children has been arrested on suspicion of pedophilia.

Father Nikolai Stremsky, said to be the patriarch of Russia's [largest family](#) and a recipient of a prize established by the Red Cross and Russian government, was reportedly [detained](#) Tuesday. Local media reported that authorities first [opened](#) a criminal investigation into unlawful restraint against Stremsky on Sept. 12.

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An Orenburg court [placed](#) Father Nikolai Stremsky in pre-trial detention until Nov. 12. Stremsky faces charges of statutory rape, indecent assault and failure to perform parental duties, which carry prison sentences of up to 20 years, 12 years and three years respectively.

The court also placed Stremsky's unnamed adopted daughter and her husband in pre-trial detention until Nov. 12 on charges of unlawful restraint, which carry a prison sentence of up to five years.

Seven minors who were said to be under Stremsky's guardianship are the victims in the case, Interfax [reported](#).

The Orenburg parish has temporarily [excommunicated](#) Father Nikolai for the duration of the investigation. Stremsky has denied his guilt.

He had previously been suspended for several months in 2015 after he was caught drunk driving.

Several of Father Nikolai's adopted children [plan](#) to demonstrate in his support, telling Russian media that they don't believe the charges.

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