

Russian Circus Bear Mauls Trainer During Show

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Neither the bear nor its trainer were seriously injured. **4helpmum / Vkontakte**

A performing bear has mauled its handler during a show in northern Russia, as animal rights activists step up their campaign to ban traveling circuses that use trained animals in the country.

Audience members filmed dramatic scenes Wednesday of the brown bear slamming its trainer to the ground and an assistant kicking it in an attempt to rescue his colleague. The animal was wearing a lead around its neck and attacked the man after it had pushed a wheelbarrow across a stage surrounded by onlookers.

The circus [said](#) neither the bear nor its trainer were seriously injured, but authorities in the republic of Karelia have launched an investigation into the incident.

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The bear attack follows a [series](#) of recent animal-cruelty [controversies](#) involving traveling circuses, including an Italian troupe's cross-country trek that some Russian residents [sought to ban](#).

Activists, who accuse traveling circuses of abusing animals by beating them to teach them to obey commands and keeping them in cramped cages, [plan to stage](#) animal-rights events over the next two weeks in dozens of Russian cities.

Russia's law on responsible animal handling bans petting zoos and keeping wild animals in apartments, but does not prohibit the use of wild animals in circuses.

Around two dozen countries, mostly in Europe and Latin America, have made it illegal to show trained wild animals in circuses.

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