The Moscow Times
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Russia Hands Down First Jail Sentence to Surrogate Mother

July 27, 2022



Helena Lopes / pexels

Russia has handed down its first-ever sentence against a surrogate mother on human trafficking charges, Russian media reported Wednesday.

A court in the Siberian city of Krasnoyarsk found Kazakh citizen Tamara Yandieva, 29, guilty of human trafficking and sentenced her to three years in prison, the state-run TASS news agency reported.

Although surrogacy is legal in Russia, authorities assert that Yandieva sold her baby, which breaks the law.

According to prosecutors, Yandieva in 2019 flew to Cambodia, where she underwent the embryo transfer procedure with the surrogate parents.

Upon returning to Krasnoyarsk, she signed a contract with Didilia, an international surrogacy and adoption center, and gave the company permission to transfer the baby to its genetic

parents in China once it was born in April 2020.

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She was paid $13,000 after she returned to Kazakhstan, the independent Meduza news website reported.

Her case is a part of a wider investigation into the Didilia company that involves 19 babies born to surrogates. The case's nine defendants include four surrogate mothers and the deputy chief doctor of the Krasnoyarsk perinatal center.

Russian ivestigators accuse the company of luring Russian and Kazakh women to Krasnoyarsk to give birth to babies for foreign citizens in exchange for money.

Yandiyeva's lawyer Lyudmila Aivar said she considers the verdict to be unlawful and plans to appeal it.

Russia has seen a backlash against foreign surrogacy in recent years despite it being a lucrative commercial industry, with warnings that women and children are being exploited by wealthy foreigners.

The State Duma approved in the first reading a bill banning surrogacy for foreigners In May.

Previously, a court in Moscow jailed several doctors for human trafficking after one of the four babies died from sudden infant death syndrome.

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