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Russia Launches Animal Cruelty Investigation Into Cat's Death

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Twix the cat. **Social media**

Russian authorities have launched an animal cruelty investigation into the death of a pet cat thrown from a train in freezing conditions, state-run and independent Russian media reported Thursday.

Twix, a ginger and white cat, became the focus of national attention when he was filmed being thrown off a Russian Railways train after escaping from his carrier earlier this month.

Thousands of volunteers were believed to have taken part in search and rescue efforts for the missing cat, and over 200,000 people signed a petition calling for the conductor who threw him off the train to be dismissed.

But days later, Twix was found dead, likely from frostbite, leading to a public uproar that Russia's top investigator Alexander Bastrykin responded to by ordering a probe into the animal's death.

Related article: How a Cat Thrown Off a Train Became a National Scandal in Russia

Citing an anonymous law enforcement source, the state-run news agency RIA Novosti reported Thursday that a criminal investigation into animal cruelty is underway.

Though no defendants have been named so far, the maximum punishment under Russian law is three years in prison.

The independent news outlet Novaya Gazeta Europe, citing an attorney who represents Twix's owner, also reported on the criminal case, but noted that no one person was being investigated.

"A criminal case into the incident has been opened, but not in relation to any specific individual," the attorney was quoted as saying.

"Experience shows that punishment [for animal cruelty] comes as a fine, not as a prison sentence," he added.

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