

Russian Mayor Says Ukrainian Special Services 'Hyped' Assault of Child

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Nizhny Tagil Mayor Vladislav Pinayev. **Vladislav Pinaev / VK**

The mayor of the industrial city of Nizhny Tagil has accused Ukrainian special services of stoking social tensions by drawing attention to the recent assault of a secondary school student, local media [reported](#) Tuesday.

Last month, local law enforcement officials [launched](#) a criminal case into the assault of an 11-year-old girl outside of her school, which took place in late December.

The assailants, two brothers who are the girl's classmates, were charged with hooliganism, and their mother was accused of involving minors in a felony.

On Tuesday, the local news outlet Mezhdud Strok published a video of Mayor Vladislav Pinayev playing down the incident.

"It was a normal occurrence. We used to fight at school every day," Pinayev told students during a visit to a high school, adding that he was forced to close the comments section on his

personal social media page.

He claimed the assault of the young girl was “hyped up by 290 comments from Ukrainian accounts” and dismissed allegations that the incident was racially motivated, as the two assailants are [ethnic Azeris](#).

“They go after any news,” Pinayev said, referring to Ukrainian special services. “More than 1,000 call centers work in countries that are unfriendly to us, mainly Ukraine and the Baltics.”

Police had initially [declined](#) to investigate the December assault but were forced to act following a public pressure campaign, according to the Telegram news channel Ostorozhno Novosti.

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