

Kemerovo Region Governor Apologizes for Blaming Newborn Deaths on Mothers

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Kemerovo Governor Ilya Seredyuk. kuzbass1.ru

The governor of Siberia's Kemerovo region on Thursday [issued](#) a public apology for comments in which he blamed the deaths of newborns at a maternity hospital earlier this month on the mothers.

Nine infants died at Novokuznetsk Maternity Hospital No. 1 between Jan. 4 and Jan. 12, prompting a judge to order its three-month closure and the arrest of its chief physician and head of intensive care, both of whom were charged with negligence resulting in death.

Earlier, regional health officials said the newborns had all suffered from a range of illnesses transmitted during childbirth or pregnancy.

Governor Ilya Seredyuk on Thursday [accused](#) some of the women who gave birth to the children of being alcoholics and claimed they had failed to seek prenatal care.

“It’s sad to say, but those expectant mothers simply did not take care of themselves, and

some of them had bad habits,” Seredyuk said during a televised Q&A session. “It’s unacceptable that they arrived at the hospital to give birth while intoxicated.”

Related article: [Court Orders 3-Month Closure of Kemerovo Region Hospital Where Newborns Died](#)

The comments immediately sparked public outrage. Senior State Duma lawmaker Nina Ostanina, a member of the Communist Party, [called for](#) Seredyuk’s resignation.

The governor, who is a member of the ruling United Russia party, subsequently issued an apology.

“I understand what matters in this situation is not just what I said, but how I said it,” he wrote in a post on Telegram. “I am genuinely sorry that my comments may have caused someone pain.”

Political analyst Konstantin Kalachev [said](#) Seredyuk’s gaffe pointed to his lack of political experience, adding that laying the blame for the death of newborns on mothers prompted a “wave of hate” against the governor.

“The blame for this also lies with the local authorities, in an economically distressed region, where there is less and less work available, where the mines are closing, where incomes are falling,” Kalachev told the broadcaster RTVI.

He speculated that President Vladimir Putin could dismiss Seredyuk, who was appointed as governor and later elected in 2024, if United Russia sees poor results in the State Duma elections scheduled for September.

A Kemerovo region court this week accused staff at Novokuznetsk Maternity Hospital No. 1 of failing to comply with health and safety regulations.

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