

Reforms Promised After Sodomy Death

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Days after a Kazan man died of injuries allegedly suffered during a shocking sodomy attack by local police, a senior Interior Ministry official vowed to renovate police stations and change how officers are evaluated.

Rights activists said the proposals were sound in principle but doubted that they would ever be put into practice, as similar promises have been made in the past.

Deputy Interior Minister Sergei Gerasimov also proposed reducing the influence of the so-called "point system," which rewards officers for the number of crimes uncovered compared with the prior year and statistics from other police stations.

"There won't be any more comparative analysis, which would allow the point system to develop," Gerasimov said Thursday, Interfax reported.

But Natalia Taubina, director of the Public Verdict Foundation, said the Interior Ministry has been saying they've done away with the point system for two years.

"They've reduced its influence on evaluation scores, but it's still in the fine print," she said.

Activists say the point system is only one of several factors that encourage abusive behavior.

"Police often lack the resources, skills and habits to investigate crimes any other way," said Tanya Lokshina, a senior researcher at Human Rights Watch.

"Torture is their standard form of investigation," she said.

Gerasimov also proposed that police stations be redesigned around common workspaces to "minimize the possibility of crimes by staff," Interfax reported.

Taubina, of the Public Verdict Foundation, said the idea was sound but impractical.

"Officers typically sit two to three people to a room, not in cubicles. The walls are load-bearing, so they can't simply be removed," she said.

Gerasimov's proposals come days after 52-year-old Sergei Nazarov died after police allegedly raped him with a champagne bottle.

Five officers, including the alleged ringleader — 25-year-old senior lieutenant Almaz Vasilov — have been arrested in connection with incident, and a criminal investigation has been opened.

Vasilov denied the charges and said Nazarov's wounds were self-inflicted, Komsomolskaya Pravda [reported](#) Wednesday.

On Thursday, a crowd of about 100 demonstrators held champagne bottles and shouted "Shame!" outside the Interior Ministry's regional headquarters in Kazan.

One demonstrator wrote "Silence = Death" across his lips, and another was detained after he shouted "Sheep!" Interfax reported.

The five officers and three superiors at the Dalny police station, where the alleged assault occurred, have been fired.

Nine official complaints have been lodged against officers at the Dalny station in the past year, and none of them resulted in arrests, said Pavel Chikov, chairman of the Agora rights center.

Alia Sadykova, 20, told Life News that officers at the station threatened to sodomize her with a champagne bottle in January in order to force a confession.

Chikov says the problem of police abuse isn't limited to the Dalny station, Kazan, or even Tatarstan.

"Every station is exactly the same. The only thing an officer can't do to force a confession is kill the person. If Nazarov hadn't died, the officers would still be on the job," he said.

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