

Russian TV Silent Over Child Killed by Nanny in Moscow

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The Kremlin has decided that some incidents in Russia are too incendiary to be shown on television.

After police on Monday detained a woman who was brandishing the severed head of a child and threatening to blow herself up in northwestern Moscow, Russia's digital media and social networks were overflowing with updates on the story and expressions of horror and outrage.

But none of the major television networks — including Channel One, Rossia-1, NTV and Moscow's TVTs — made a single mention of the incident in their newscasts, the RBC business news agency reported. RBC said its journalists watched all newscasts by these and other television channels following the woman's detention.

The majority of Russians get their news from television, according to polls, and as far as the main television networks were concerned, the bloodcurdling story simply did not happen.

RBC cited two unidentified employees of different networks as saying broadcasters received “recommendations” to stay clear of the story. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov denied the administration issuing any directives to the networks, but said he approved of the absence of the incident from television newscasts.

“The channels themselves decided to not show crazy people,” Peskov was quoted by RBC as saying. “But we support them.”

Unidentified employees of Russian television networks told RBC the authorities wanted the story scrapped from newscasts to avoid drawing the nation's attention to ethnically or religiously charged issues.

The woman who held the severed head has been identified as a 38-year-old national of Uzbekistan, a former Soviet republic in Central Asia, who is accused of killing the child in whose family she worked as a nanny.

She was dressed in black, proclaimed she was a “terrorist” and was shouting “Allahu Akbar,” according to media reports, although no explosives were reportedly found on the woman after her detention.

Concerned about a possible backlash, Russia's Muslim leaders urged against linking the incident with Islam, the TASS news agency reported.

“This is an issue of an absolutely unhinged person, so it would be completely erroneous to associate some actions with Muslims and Islam, on the basis of clothing or some slogans,” the head of Moscow's Muslim council, Ildar Alyautdinov, was quoted as saying in a statement.

He also expressed condolences to the child's family, adding: “Every Muslim will feel that pain as their personal tragedy,” TASS reported.

Earlier on Monday, firefighters had discovered the decapitated body of a 4-year-old child after putting out a fire in an apartment in northwestern Moscow, the Interfax news agency reported.

According to the preliminary data of the Investigative Committee, the nanny had waited until the family left the apartment, killed the child, set the apartment on fire and departed, RIA Novosti reported. She was detained outside a nearby subway station while holding a child's severed head.

The only network that made any mention of the incident was privately owned Ren-TV, which reported the killing in northwestern Moscow in its early afternoon newscast, according to RBC. It made no mention later in the day of the detention of the woman or the incident.

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