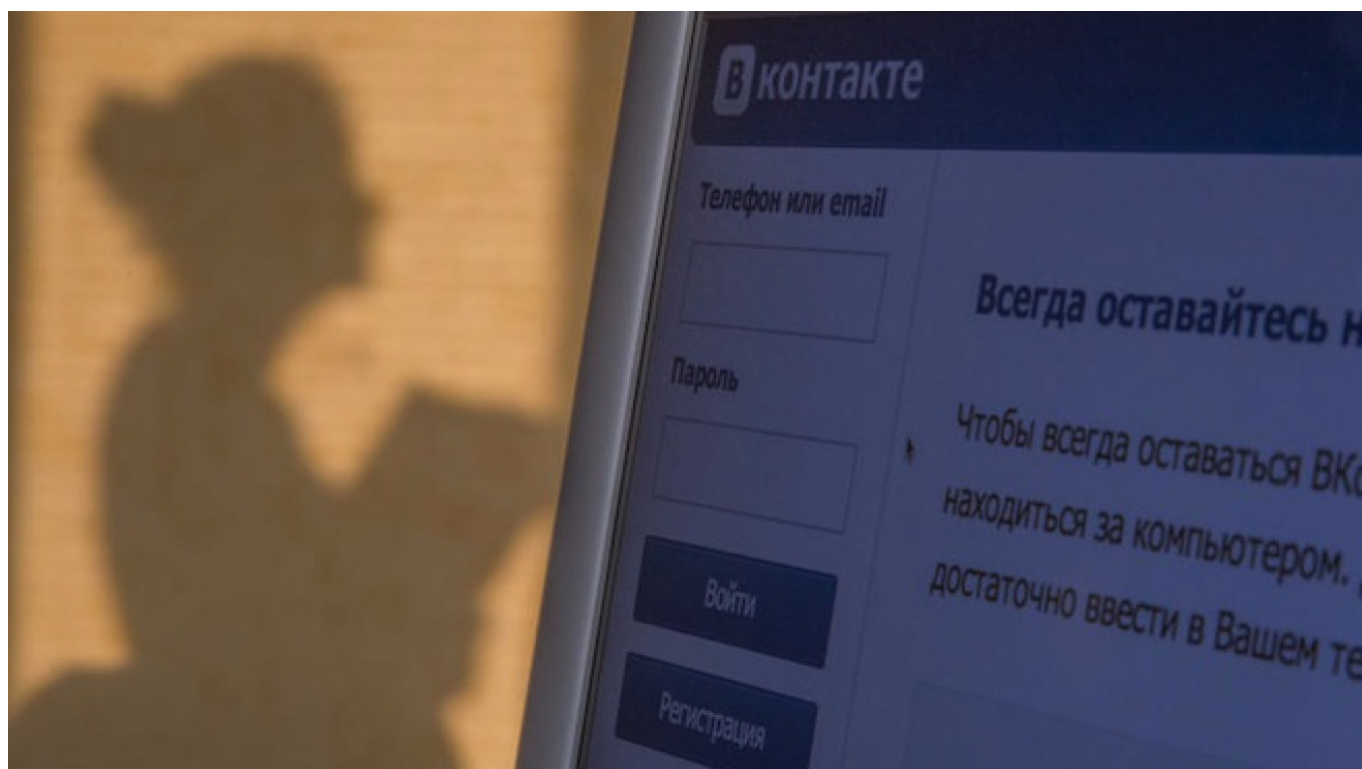


Criminal Case Launched Into Russian Pro-Suicide Social Media Group

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A criminal case against the owners of a social media group accused of encouraging teen suicide has been launched in St. Petersburg, a statement published by the Russian Investigative Committee said Friday.

If found guilty of promoting suicide, those involved may face up to five years imprisonment.

The Novaya Gazeta newspaper published an article about private pro-suicide groups on Russian social network VKontakte on Monday. The groups have led to the deaths of 130 minors between November 2015 and April 2016, the report claimed.

The article has drawn widespread public attention, as well as interest from officials.

Russia's media watchdog Roscomnadzor announced that it was launching checks into Vkontakte groups in order to block pro-suicide material. The Vkontakte network pledged their full cooperation, adding that such groups will be deleted without the possibility of appeal, Novaya Gazeta reported.

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<https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2016/05/20/criminal-case-launched-into-russian-pro-suicide-social-media-group-a52959>