
Director of interactive zoo where children got hurt to stand trial in Saratov Region



The Saratov Region Office of the Investigative Committee has finished an investigation against CEO of a firm that set up an interactive zoo in the town of Saratov. The man is charged with providing unsafe services under Part 1 of Article 238, Part 2, items “b” and “c” of Article 238 of the RF Criminal Code.

Children got hurt because of violations by organizers of the zoo. On 26 July 2017, a leopard attacked a 6-year-old girl. She was taken to hospital with injuries to her neck, back and stomach. The same day, the same leopard attacked a 7-year-old boy and bit his left leg. It was a fortunate accident that the children did not sustain more serious injuries, though investigators have to face more serious cases.

For example, on 15 October 2015, a tragedy happened in Voronezh region, when a bear ran away

from a domestic zoo and killed an elderly man and wounded the owner. Chairman of the Investigative Committee Alexander Bastrykin ordered the Central office to supervise the investigation opened by the Voronezh Region investigative authority against the 48-year-old owner of the zoo suspected of providing unsafe services entailing death of a person under Part 2, item “c” of Article 238 of the RF Criminal Code. According to preliminary data, the 48-year-old businessman had kept and bred in his property in the settlement of Semiluki, Semiluki District, Voronezh Region, different animals, including the bear kept in an enclosure. The wild animal had torn out part of the enclosure’s walls and run away. The bear then attacked an 86-year-old man and killed him. The owner tried to calm down the animal and get it back into the cage, but was wounded and taken to hospital. Investigators examined the scene several times, ordered a forensic medical examination and are now working to identify and question eye-witnesses. They are also checking if the permission to keep and breed wild animals had been issued to the man legally.

Small interactive zoos, though they keep less dangerous animals, still pose threat to citizens, especially minors, if the organization is wrong. According to Rospotrebnadzor (the federal consumer rights protection authority), Moscow have been seeing more cases when visitors get bitten by animals in such zoos. In May 2017, a coati bit a child in a zoo in Mozaika shopping mall. The Moscow Office of Rospotrebnadzor revealed violations of laws: the animals were not vaccinated against diseases common for both people and animals, there were no data on immunization of employees under job-related risk of getting rabies. The zoo’s operation was suspended.

The incident in the Saratov interactive zoo confirmed once more that irresponsible and negligent attitude of the organizers can cause serious troubles. The CEO of the zoo was detained and a court ruled to place him under house arrest pending trial. The accused admitted the guilt.

During the preliminary investigation, the investigators took necessary measures to close the zoo and resettle the animals to Penza municipal zoo.

The investigators have enough evidence, so the criminal case with the signed indictment has been referred to court.

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