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**On International Children’s Day, the Investigative Committee of the Russian Federation reminds that children need our care and protection on every day**



On November 20, Russia celebrates International Children’s Day. The Day was introduced by the UN General Assembly in 1954 as the day for international unity and awareness on issues of children. The date was not random - the Declaration and the Convention on the Rights of the Child were adopted on November 20, so on this day it is customary to celebrate the anniversary of the documents that have become fundamental in protecting the rights of minors.

On this day, Russia together with the whole world holds various events to raise awareness to unresolved issues of education, healthcare and well-being of children.

Today, the staff of the Investigative Committee of Russia holds a lesson of courage “Citizen since

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Childhood” in Artek International Children Centre for its students - winners of the Young Investigator programme. Later, the staff of the Committee is going to introduce to the children profession “Forensics Investigator. Scene of the Crime Examination”.

On International Children’s Day, the Investigative Committee of the Russian Federation reminds that we need to care for lawful rights and interests of children daily, not once a year.

Chairman of the Committee Alexander Bastrykin requires that his subordinates, while on duty, maintain a principled approach to protecting of the rights of children, their life and health.

When investigating crimes against children, the investigative bodies of the Investigative Committee of Russia always establish the circumstances of the offences, and the social circle and family environments of the child; provide a legal assessment of actions (inaction) of the staff of relevant ministries and agencies in charge of the prevention of such offences and of the supervisions of the minors’ living conditions, especially in troubled families. Moreover, they establish whether the safety of minors in children’s facilities are secured properly and efficiently; whether any psychological or teaching assistance to the children was arranged and provided; whether there were real opportunities created to engage the children in extracurricular activities and free sports classes; whether the children participated in a public and state children and youth organisation, which activities are entirely focused on the development and education of schoolchildren. Procedural decisions are made upon the results of the conducted probes, including opening an investigation. For instance, in 9 months of 2018, the staff of the Investigative Committee has introduced 9,802 recommendations to various government authorities, juvenile delinquency prevention authorities, and other agencies in accordance with Part 2 of Article 158 of the Criminal Procedural Code of Russia.

In 2017, 4,235 individuals in charge of the prevention of offences against minors were subjected to disciplinary action upon the consideration of recommendations and letters written by investigators of crimes against minors.

In 9 months of 2018, the bodies of the Investigative Committee of Russia have opened **15,492** investigations into offences against minors with 11,675 persons recognised as victims: 374 infants below the age of 1 year; 789 children from 1 to 5 years old; 1,647 children from 6 to 10 years old; 3,640 children from 11 to 14 years old; 5,225 children from 15 to 17 years old. The total of **917** children **died** of criminal offences in 9 months of 2018. This summer alone, **5 children died** in children’s recreational camps, while around **500** deaths of minors were registered during uncoordinated recreation.

The Chairman of the Investigative Committee of Russia requires investigators’ paying attention not only to solving crimes against children and bringing the perpetrators to justice, but also to matters of mitigation of further psychological traumas of minors suffered offences, especially of sexual nature. Introduction of children psychologists to the staff structure of the Central Office and Investigations Directorates of the Investigative Committee in 2014 was aimed at the children’s psychological

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trauma mitigation.

When investigating criminal cases, investigators must both solve the crime and collaborate with the Russian Ministry of Health to provide injured children with timely and comprehensive advanced medical assistance, as well as with proper conditions for further rehabilitation. Most effective is the collaboration of the Investigative Committee and Leonid Roshal Emergency Children's Surgery and Traumatology Research Institute, where high-tech medical assistance is provided to children who suffered offences, including those in the area of the armed conflicts in the South-East Ukraine and the Syrian Arab Republic. Over the years, the joint efforts of the doctors and IC representatives helped Ivan Voronov, who suffered a mine-blast trauma in the Donetsk People's Republic; Pavel Arkhipov, who suffered a medical error; and Ivan Krapivin, who was seriously injured in an attack of a drunken neighbour. Upon IC's initiatives, the fate of every injured child is supervised by top officials of the Russian Ministry of Health. At the moment, Ministry's specialists provide adequate assistance to 6-year-old Stepan injured in his guardian family in Vologda Region.

Alexander Bastrykin and his regional subordinates pay special attention to problems of children at personal receptions of citizens. At that, no complaint on violation of the children's rights is left unattended.

The Committee, jointly with the Children's Rights Commissioner for the President of the Russian Federation, Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Health, and other interested agencies, provides help to disadvantaged children, including orphans and minors from dysfunctional families. For instance, the Investigative Committee of Russia supervises several hundreds of special children's institutions across the country. And it needs to be mentioned that an important aspect of work with such children for the staff of the Investigative Committee is not the provision of material help, but communication and bringing of an adequate baselines of life in them.

The Investigative Committee of Russia established the relevant educational network comprising of the Alexander Nevsky Cadet Corps and the Saint Petersburg Cadet School, two Academies - in Moscow and Saint Petersburg, and about 50 relevant cadet classes in schools under the patronage of the Committee, where children, who strive to serve in law enforcement, study. There are disadvantaged children among pupils and students who will be awarded preferences if apply to the educational facilities of the Investigative Committee of Russia.

The Central Office and Regional Investigations Directorates of the Investigative Committee of Russia pay special attention to the promotion of healthy life and regular training. A range of the constituent entities of the Russian Federation has been holding annual international judo tournaments for the cup of the Chairman of the Investigative Committee of Russia for nine years in a row. Also for nine years, Saint Petersburg has been hosting a junior ice hockey tournament for the cup of the IC featuring Russian and foreign teams.

Themed meetings with veterans of investigation and other law enforcement agencies are one of the

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platforms of communication with the youth. Under an instruction of the staff of the Investigative Committee of Russia, over 10 meetings with representatives of the Special Rapid Response Unit and the National Guard of the Russian Federation in 2018, who shared stories about their complicated service and working conditions in hot spots. The most recent of such meetings in Novosibirsk gathered around 700 children alone. As a result of the meetings, kids see a worthy example of courage, dignity, and true service to the Motherland, and some of them decide to also serve in law enforcement in the future.

It should be noted that a significant number of crimes, as well as accidents with missing children, were prevented due to the coordinated work of law enforcement agencies with volunteer organisations. Earlier, based upon the results of repeated discussions on existing shortcomings in the organisation of the law enforcement work, both among the agencies and jointly with voluntary search teams, the Chairman of the Investigative Committee of Russia instructed to work out a single document together with volunteers and interested agencies that would provide for effective interaction among each other and with volunteer public organisations.

Following that, the Investigative Committee of Russia, in collaboration with representative of the public and state stakeholders including the Ministry for Internal Affairs, EMERCOM, Ministry for Defence, and the National Guard of Russian Federation, developed and signed a regulatory act on an algorithm of interaction between state agencies, volunteer organisations, and volunteers in arranging and carrying out searches of missing citizens, including minors. The document was introduced to all Regional Directorates of the Russian IC. The staff of the territorial investigative bodies of the Investigative Committee regularly cooperates with volunteer associations, such as Lisa Alert, VolgoSpas - Missing Children Search, Legion Public Movement, and regional public organisation “Piter-Search”.

The introduction of the document made it possible to shorten the timeframe for finding a child and to minimize the chance of negative consequences and threats to their life and health, as well as helped expose the criminals who were trying to commit an illegal act against a child in the shortest possible time.

The analysis of criminal investigations and pre-investigation probes enabled the IC of Russia to make proposals for changes and amendments to a number of regulatory acts. For instance, the Investigative Committee engaged in the development of a draft law on children’s recreation, which the President of the Russian Federation ordered to prepare. The law aimed at provision of safe recreation activities for children was approved at the final reading by the State Duma in April 2018.

At the initiative of the Investigative Committee, Federal Law No. 14-FZ “On Amendments to the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation and Certain Legislative Acts of the Russian Federation in Order to Enhance Liability for Crimes of a Sexual Nature Committed Against Minors” was adopted. That contributed to, among other things, elimination of probation to persons committed offences against sexual integrity of minors under the age of 14.

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Federal Law No. 432-FZ “On Amendments to Certain Legislative Acts of the Russian Federation to Improve the Protection of the Rights of Victims in Criminal Proceedings” was adopted; it provides for additional measures to protect the rights of juvenile victims. The new regulations have established a single age (up to 16 years old), when participation of a teacher or psychologist during an interrogation of a teenager is mandatory. And, as the investigative practice has shown, the participation of a psychologist in the interrogation of a victim or witness allows to obtain more complete and reliable information about the crime committed.

In addition, the Investigative Committee had repeatedly insisted on the introduction of specified term “children pornography” and raised the question on the need to make amendments. The amendments were approved in 2016.

The integrated work of the Investigative Committee of Russia in the protection of the children’s rights has been yielding positive results. In 9 months of 2018, **6,562** investigations into offences committed by minors have been opened. This is a 6% decrease year-on-year. The number of probes into offences against children has decreased by 4% to **15,492** in the 9 months of 2018; the vast majority of them solved by officers of the Investigative Committee of Russia. **7,928** investigations into offences against minors have been sent to the court.

The Investigative Committee of the Russian Federation intends to continue building up the work on protection and development of children, for the agency’s motto is “No child is somebody else’s.”

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