
Interview by First Deputy Chairman of Russia's Investigative Committee V. Piskarev to Rossiyskaya Gazeta

Missing

Investigative Committee will involve volunteers to search for missing children

Vasili Ivanovich Piskarev, First Deputy Chairman of Russia's Investigative Committee (SKR), Colonel General of Justice told about one important initiative, which Investigative Committee is going to implement in the near future. Investigators searching for missing children will be bound to closely cooperate with voluntary organizations.

Mr Piskarev, is working with volunteers just a proposal, good undertaking or something absolutely real?

Vasili Piskarev: It is an absolutely real proposal. Each fact of child missing is not only the common misfortune, but common responsibility as well. Search for a missing child is not just a duty, but civil obligation of each adult person. I think that the noble and very important for both parents and the child and law enforcement bodies activity of voluntary organizations and movements who help searching the children deserves special respect and high appreciation.

For streamlining of cooperation and coherent actions of investigating bodies of SKR with volunteer groups and social movements we have developed a draft of the appropriate Directions of SKR Chairman.

What such cooperation will be like in real life?

Vasili Piskarev: Any of our investigators has to have information on ongoing voluntary organizations in the region.

This allows him to make quick contacts with their coordinators in case of emergency situation relating to missing children.

Most of our citizens don't know the date of 25 May yet. This year Russia for the first time has been holding events related to International Day of Missing Children. The symbol of this day is a flower of blue forget-me-not.

How serious is the situation with missing children in our country?

Vasili Piskarev: Official statistics for 2011 stands at 18 thousand missing children. In absolute figures it makes up 49 children a day of which 4 are never found.

Is it hard to work knowing such figures?

Vasili Piskarev: We, officials of Investigative Committee, will never put up with this situation. We will make and are making everything possible to create an efficient system for protection of children's rights which unites really sincere, devoted people, ready for the sake of a child for free and in their free time to render any help in their power.

In investigating work the most morally difficult part is sorrows, sufferings and tears of inconsolable mothers.

And though an investigator in such situations must stay a professional, keep his head cool collecting evidence exposing a criminal, abstract completely away from depths of people's sorrows, it is impossible to do that.

What is the most outrageous for a professional in searching for a missing child?

Vasili Piskarev: It is the most distressing in such moments to see indifference and hard-heartedness of other people on whom sometimes a lot depends - both officials and ordinary citizens.

Why are not all children found? Is it only an accident that influences the search?

Vasili Piskarev: Searching practice first of all shows how important it is to correctly and timely organize cooperation ensuring coherent actions of people. This applies both to coherence inside state agencies and use of help of social volunteer organizations and movements.

But if we make it strict to the law, search of missing is the task of police forces.

Vasili Piskarev: Yes, investigators are involved to check circumstances of person's disappearance only after receiving information from internal affairs bodies that these circumstances contain signs of crime.

The number of children missed last year alone is really frightening. Let's go back to these appalling figures.

Vasili Piskarev: Unfortunately, I have to admit that a considerable number of missing minors fall victims to crimes.

Moreover, year of 2012 saw substantial increase in grave and especially grave crimes against children.

Can you give more details?

Vasili Piskarev: It has been only 7 months since the beginning of the year, so we have statistics for 5 months of 2012.

Over this period investigating bodies of the Investigation Committee have recognized 9,063 minors as victims of crimes, which significantly, even considering expansion of competence, exceeds the number of children recognized victims in 2011. Then there were fewer of them – 7,179.

Today searching for missing children is not like searching for adults.

Vasili Piskarev: In March this year I gave a special order to heads of investigating bodies.

It says that if there is information about emergency situation with children they should immediately launch a criminal case. This should be done based on the established facts indicating possible signs of a crime.

During investigation close cooperation should be set up with juvenile agencies of internal affairs bodies, as well as with voluntary organizations searching for the missing people.

Such cooperation makes it possible to get in minimum time information which is important not only for searching for the missing child, but for investigation of a criminal case as well.

What is the most important for a professional in a system of search for missing children?

Vasili Piskarev: I want to stress once more that information itself however important, without efficient mechanisms of its receipt, exchange, procedural registration in cases prescribed by the law not always can help to find a child.

For us it is important not just find the child, but find him alive. All of us remember the tragedy of 2010 with Liza Fomkina. The girl was missing in Moscow Region and searched for by hundreds of professionals and volunteers.

In that case, experts established that the girl, who had been searched for 10 days in Moscow Region, had been dead 2 days before her body was found.

Information is the more valuable the faster we use it, check it, carry out search and investigation operations.

Investigative Committee has been organizing help to affected children from the day it was created.

Vasili Piskarev: As early as 2009 Investigative Committee offered to set up National Help Center for Missing and Affected Children. It supposed to be a kind of coordinator of efforts of public associations and law enforcement in the area of protection of children's rights.

Hot lines were planned to be set up within the framework of the Center, that is federal and regional toll-free telephone services created for messages on missing children and crimes against children.

There supposed to be a so-called call-center as well for receipt, processing, systematization, analysis, and transfer the information on missing children to law enforcement bodies.

The idea is good, but what has been done so far?

Vasili Piscarev: I should note that this offer of Investigative Committee was supported by both authorities and public circles.

Drafts of appropriate documents have been developed with active participation of right protection movement Soprotivleniye. And were supported by the RF President.

On 1 June 2012 RF President Vladimir Putin signed Decree “On national strategy of actions in the interests of children for 2012-2017”.

What is important in this document?

Vasili Piskarev: The Decree provides for creation of noncommercial space Russian National Monitoring Help Center for Missing and Affected Children. It will be done to unite efforts of the

state and citizens in searching for missing children. But not only this. A lot of attention will be paid to prevention and suppression of violent and sexual crimes against children including those committed using information communications, as well as to approving efficiency of investigating bodies in investigating criminal encroachments on children.

Volunteers who will help you need to be taught something or not?

Vasili Piskarev: I think it is important to explain volunteers provisions of the current law, regulating matters of pre-investigation check and preliminary investigation, protection of consultation rights.

Work of territorial investigating bodies with voluntary organizations will be coordinated by the central office of the Investigative Committee.

FIGURE

18 thousand children got missed in 2011

Изображения



18 July 2012

Page address: <https://en.sledcom.ru/press/interview/item/507055>