

Beat: Miscellaneous

Proposed Russian law bans online speech promoting pedophilia

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USPA News - A Russian legislator submitted a bill Wednesday that would allow the government's internet watchdog to block access to websites that contain texts which are deemed to favor pedophilia, strengthening current laws that allow the blocking of websites containing child pornography. The bill was submitted to the State Duma, Russia's lower house of parliament, by Liberal Democratic Party (LDPR) member of parliament Mikhail Degtyarev.

It contains a number of amendments to the federal law on information that was last changed in 2012 to allow the government's internet watchdog to block child pornography websites. But Degtyarev said the current law does not allow the government to block other content written or distributed by pedophiles. "Since the federal legislation makes emphasis on banning visual images and doesn't regulate in any way the freedom of pedophilic speech and ideas, amoral texts and messages of a pedophilic character are circulated quite legally," he said, as quoted by the Itar-Tass news agency. The legislator said he believes his bill will help to prevent future crimes against children and will limit access to internet sources used by pedophiles. It was not immediately clear whether the bill was likely to gather sufficient support or when a vote in parliament may take place. More than 9,500 sex crimes against children were reported in Russia in 2009, including more than 960 cases that involved rape. But despite the authorities' declared fight against the sexual abuse of minors, police are often slow to respond to allegations of child abuse, according to activists. Pavel Astakhov, Russia's Children's Rights Commissioner to President Vladimir Putin, has in the past suggested the existence of a "pedophile lobby" in the country's lower house of parliament, which he believes is responsible for the blocking of legislation that would have aided the fight against child sex abuse. However, the State Duma approved a bill in October 2011 that stipulates the voluntary chemical castration for pedophiles and other rapists. It also introduced life imprisonment as a possible punishment for pedophiles who are repeat offenders and stripped convicted pedophiles of the right to plea for a suspended sentence. Laws regarding the possession of child pornography have also been under discussion for years. Russia is only one of two major countries in the world where the simple possession of child pornography is legal, although the production of it is illegal. The second country is Japan where it is legal to possess child pornography as long as there is no intent to sell or distribute the material.

Article online:

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