

Russia sounds alarm over spiralling teenage suicides

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Top Russian psychiatrists on Friday called for urgent measures to battle the soaring teenage suicide rate, one of the world's highest.

The number of 15 to 19-year-olds taking their own lives is almost three times higher than the world average at 19 to 20 per 100,000, the health ministry's chief psychiatrist Zurab Kekelidze told a round table in Moscow.

Four thousand teenagers commit suicide every year, Russia's presidential ombudsman for children, Pavel Astakhov, said Thursday.

Kekelidze said psychology must be taught in schools to help children resolve their problems by and also called on the Russian Orthodox Church to extend support to disturbed youths.

"We have developed a programme and very soon ...start implementing it," Kekelidze said, cited by the RIA Novosti news agency.

He also denounced controversial Internet forums that advise on the different ways of committing suicide.

Boris Polozhy, one of the main doctors at Moscow's Serbsky Centre [psychiatric hospital](#) said: "The situation is extremely bad in our country."

This week, two [teenage girls](#) jumped together off the roof of an apartment building in the town of Lobnya in the Moscow region in the third such double suicide in Russia since October.

On Friday investigators said they were looking into the death of a 12-year-old boy, who hung himself on a horizontal bar at his home in Siberia's Krasnoyarsk region.

Russia now has the world's third highest rate of suicides among adolescents, according to [UNICEF](#) and the Russian [health ministry](#).

Since the turbulent 1990s, the country saw an overall fall in the number of suicides, with statistics showing a decline from 42 suicides per 100,000 people to 23.5 suicides between 1995 and 2010.

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