

Russia's Child Population Declines 4 Million in 10 Years
Novosti

MOSCOW, June 11 /from RIA Novosti's Aleksander Chabanu/ - Russia's child population has shrunk by 4 million over the past 10 years. Seventy-five percent of those children died unnatural deaths. Vera Lekareva, in charge of the State Duma commission for prevention of child homelessness and neglect, of violations of law by and drug addiction among children, has cited the figures at a news conference in Moscow.

The MP urged adoption of a law, which would establish a children's rights commissioner. Such a draft law has been recently submitted to the Russian State Duma, parliament's lower house, for consideration.

Ms Lekareva then cited Prosecutor General's Office reports, which say that nearly 2 million kids do not go to school, and many of them are engaged in criminal actions falling victims to traffickers and adventurers of all sorts.

Ninety-five percent of 720,000 registered orphans are so called social orphans, i.e. children who have run away from home, from economically and socially challenged families, or quite fortunate ones, said the MP. The government, she said, must provide for conditions, which would allow families to have children and not to abandon them.

Ms Lekareva spoke out in favour of a governmental agency that should be set up to deal with child problems. Apart from that, she believes the government should launch propaganda of a healthy way of life on national television and through other news media.

Besides, Vera Lekareva found it necessary that under-aged drug-addicts and alcoholics be forced to undergo related treatment.