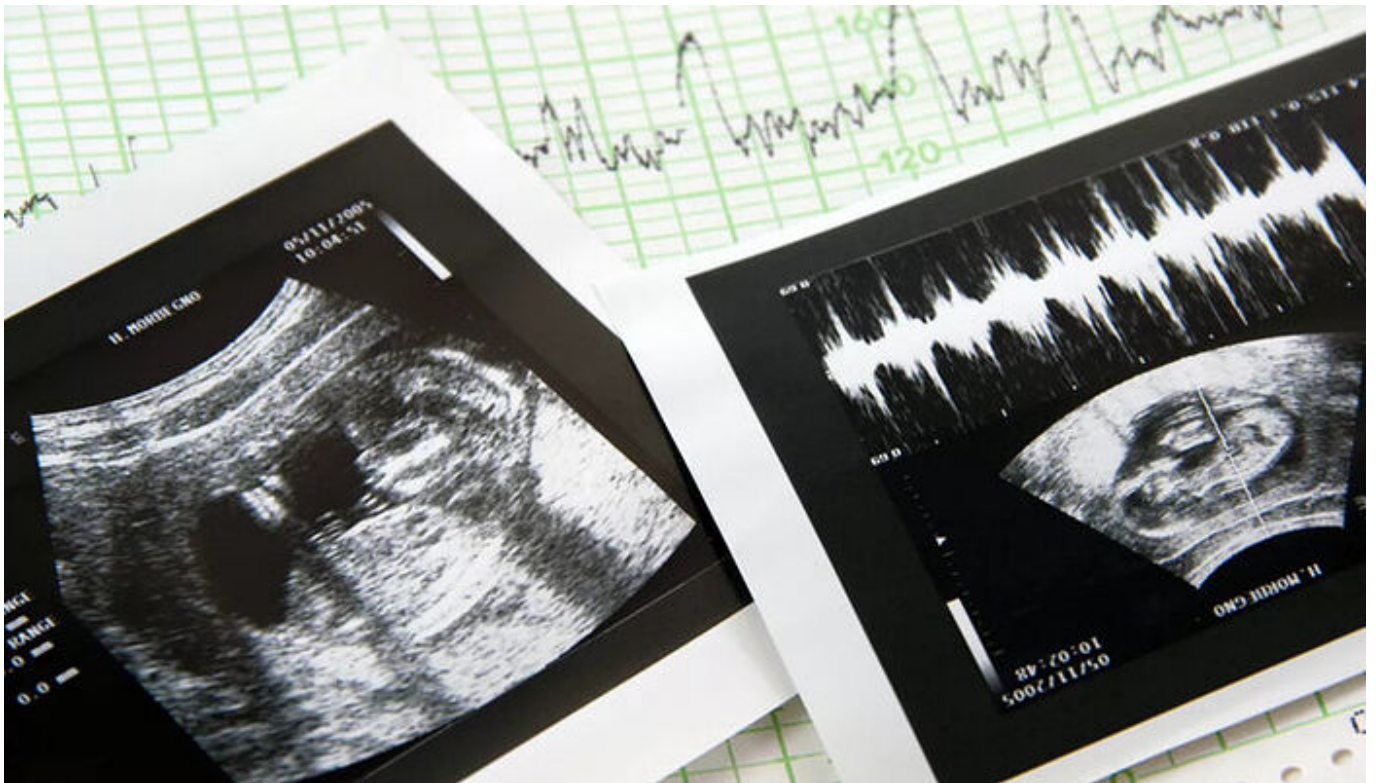


ABORTIONS SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN MORTALITY STATISTICS—RUSSIAN CHURCH REP



Russian society has become too accustomed to legalized abortions, but including abortions in national mortality statistics could help change public perception, believes Maria Studenikina, the head of the Maternity Protection Division of the Russian Church's Synodal Department for Social Service and Charity.

Studenikina, who also serves as director of the Orthodox Mercy service's Home for Mothers, agreed that abortions should be officially recognized as the death of a person. The inclusion of abortion data in mortality statistics could also help Russia come out of its demographic crisis, she said, reports RIA-Novosti.

The idea was first expressed by the head of the Save Life charity program Ekaterina Markova, who said that if the proposal is implemented, "the younger generation will grow up in a country where artificial abortions are officially recognized as the death of a person," and as a result, "many will refuse the artificial termination of pregnancy, recognizing the procedure as the murder of a person."

"With 100 years of abortions, our societal consciousness has been deformed; we're

used to living with this phenomenon; we're not used to noticing it," Markova noted.

"I believe that the inclusion of artificial abortion statistics in mortality statistics will allow society to take a fresh look at the problem. Including the government," Markova said.

Studenikina concurred: "Taking into account the demographic situation, the initiative is more than relevant. Abortions should be officially recognized as the death of a person, and the work on their prevention should reach the highest level."

In November, Studenikina called for abortion to be removed from the list of services covered by the taxpayer-funded state insurance program.

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