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Nashi, Mitvol Fume Over Tots and Prostitutes

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Mitvol **Vladimir Filonov**

A feud between Nashi and Moscow prefect Oleg Mitvol is escalating, with the pro-Kremlin youth group demanding that Mitvol's staff vacate an office and the prefect seeking criminal charges against a Nashi spokeswoman who said he protected brothels in his district.

Nashi activists rallied Friday outside the headquarters for Moscow's Northern Administrative District, which Mitvol runs, to demand that Timiryazevsky District authorities vacate their office in a building originally meant to house a kindergarten, Nashi said in a statement.

Nashi left a wooden plank at the door to Mitvol's office in a literal interpretation of Jesus' saying in Matthew 7:3 that the person who judges others for having specks in their eyes should first remove the plank from his own eye.

Mitvol earlier asked Nashi to vacate its headquarters so the building could be reverted to a

kindergarten as originally intended by builders.

Both Mitvol and Nashi sought to portray their demands as having the backing of Prime Minister Vladimir Putin, who has asked that former kindergartens be reopened to deal with a national shortage.

Police detained two Nashi activists at the rally after they started shouting slogans that hadn't been authorized by city authorities for the rally, including, "Mitvol, come out," Interfax reported.

Meanwhile, Mitvol asked district police to open a criminal investigation into possible defamation charges against Nashi spokeswoman Kristina Potupchik, who accused Mitvol in a blog post Thursday of taking local brothels "under his wing," Interfax reported.

Potupchik, speaking by telephone, called Mitvol's complaint "revenge" after Nashi discovered more than 30 brothels, as well as the former kindergarten occupied by Timiryazevsky authorities in his district.

If charged and convicted of defamation, Potupchik could face up to three years in prison.

Nashi complained last week that Mitvol had ignored their findings about brothels in his district and said his silence had forced them to hang a giant poster of Mitvol outside one of the buildings supposedly housing a brothel. The poster said Mitvol was providing brothels for local residents.

Mitvol denied receiving information about brothels from Nashi.

Mitvol also has asked Vasily Yakemenko, head of the Federal Agency for Youth Affairs and a former Nashi leader, to cut financing for Nashi from the federal budget because of the "vandalism prank" with the poster that "couldn't have been pulled off without adequate financial backing," Interfax reported.

Potupchik said Mitvol "has no idea where Nashi gets its finances." She refused to elaborate.

Rostislav Turovsky, an independent analyst, said Nashi's campaign against Mitvol might be a warning against him harboring mayoral ambitions or revenge for his support for an alternative route for an $8 billion highway that is supposed to run through the Khimki forest.

Turovsky said Nashi's campaign clearly had been ordered by someone outside of the group, possibly by people close to Prime Minister Vladimir Putin, the Moscow region authorities or City Hall.

"Nashi acted as a force tasked to show Mitvol who is the master in the house," Turovsky said.

Nashi is widely believed to be the brainchild of Vladislav Surkov, first deputy head of the presidential administration.

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