Zenit Fans Rampage After Title Win in St. Petersburg

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Policemen chasing a Zenit fan on a St. Petersburg street late Sunday. **Alexander Demianchuk**

ST. PETERSBURG — Hundreds of Zenit St. Petersburg supporters clashed overnight with riot police and smashed bus stops in central St. Petersburg after their team won the domestic league.

Fans invaded the pitch and tore down the goalposts after Zenit crushed Rostov 5-0 on Sunday to secure the title and qualify for the group stages of next season's Champions League.

At least 1,000 Zenit supporters — who have one of the worst reputations for violence in Russia — then tried to march down the city's main thoroughfare, Nevsky Prospekt, but were blocked by riot police, witnesses said.

State television showed pictures of several dozen riot police, backed by two armored cars, running toward fans.

Witnesses said they saw police beat and detain several fans who threw flares and bottles.

A spokesman said police prevented about 200 fans from marching down Nevsky Prospekt but denied that there were clashes. He added that one policeman suffered a minor head injury after falling.

Last month, several fans from Croatian club Hajduk Split were beaten up by Zenit rivals at a hotel in St. Petersburg ahead of a Europa League game, national news agencies reported.