

NTV Producer Leaves, Marking 2nd Departure

January 25, 2012

The  Moscow Times

A well-known senior producer for state-owned broadcaster NTV has left the station, marking the second high-profile departure from the network in recent months.

Nikolai Kartoza, a leading producer behind many acclaimed shows such as Leonid Parfyonov's award-winning documentary series, *Namedni*, left the network under a "mutual agreement," NTV said in a statement.

Kartoza also held a senior management position at the channel — run by state-owned Gazprom — and oversaw prime-time programs.

Kartoza told RIA-Novosti that he was leaving the company to concentrate on his own projects and said he has always viewed NTV boss, Kremlin-connected Vladimir Kulistikov, to be like "his father."

But the producer's latest projects — like the popular weekly current affairs program "Central TV" and "Ntvshniki" talk show — frequently featured opposition voices and independent

reaction to recent political events.

Kartozia is the second senior NTV employee to leave the company this year. Earlier this month, host Pavel Lobkov was fired.

Lobkov, a veteran of the station said earlier that his departure came after NTV management expressed displeasure at his decision to speak at post-election opposition rallies and give interviews to "rival channels."

It is unclear if Kartozia's departure was motivated by political reasons.

Lobkov told Dozhd Internet television channel Wednesday that "propaganda might increase" on NTV now that Kartozia has left.

Once a flagship for opinion-driven programming, NTV has focused more on entertainment in recent years. The channel has come under fire for engaging in what critics say are biased attacks on the political opposition.

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