

Vkontakte Founder Tosses 5,000-Ruble Notes Out Window

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A paper airplane with a 5,000-ruble note attached sails out the window

The founder of the social-networking site Vkontakte celebrated St. Petersburg's 309th anniversary over the weekend by tossing paper airplanes carrying 5,000 ruble notes out a building window.

But he had to stop when violence erupted in the eager crowd below.

Pavel Durov, who created Vkontakte in 2006, and several co-workers folded the paper airplanes and inserted the bills, worth about \$155 each, at their St. Petersburg offices on Sunday. They then tossed them out the window.

Bloggers described the mayhem that broke out below, where locals had been enjoying citywide festivities connected to the anniversary of St. Petersburg's founding by Peter the Great on May 27, 1703.

"Just now Durov was throwing 5,000 ruble notes out the window and was recording how

people jumped on the money, pressing on each other and beating each other," Yekaterina Abramova wrote on Vkontakte.

"This is disgusting. They threw out about 10 bills. People came out of the crowd with broken noses, were climbing on traffic lights, and behaving like monkeys. Durov had a good laugh. Shame on you, Pavel," she said.

Other bloggers posted pictures showing paper airplanes sailing out of an ornately decorated window flanked by statues.

Durov, whose fortune is estimated at \$250 million by Finance magazine, explained on Twitter that his hopes of contributing to St. Petersburg's big day had gone awry.

"My co-workers and I decided to support the holiday atmosphere with a little event, but we had to stop quickly," Durov said. "People started to behave like animals."

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