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Madonna Confrontation Looms as United Russia Deputy Gives Warning

By The Moscow Times

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United Russia deputy Vitaly Milonov

The United Russia city deputy who authored St. Petersburg's notorious law banning "homosexual propaganda" has warned that he will be certain to "maintain norms of decency" at a Madonna concert set for early August where the singer said she would speak out for gay rights.

"We warn the organizers of the concert so that everything goes well. Otherwise they will face the harsh laws of St. Petersburg," United Russia Deputy Vitaly Milonov said, Interfax reported.

"I heard at the concerts on this tour she pulled off her tights, and we will not have that here," he added. The deputy said he has not decided whether or not he will attend the concert personally.

In March, Madonna said she would come to St. Petersburg to speak up for the gay community.

"I will speak during my show about this ridiculous atrocity," Madonna said. "I don't run away from adversity," she added, calling herself a "freedom fighter."

The bill, signed into law March 7 by St. Petersburg Governor Georgy Poltavchenko, an ally of President-elect Vladimir Putin, bans lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered "propaganda" that could give minors "the false perception that traditional and nontraditional relationships are socially equal.

Fines can be issued from 5,000 to 50,000 rubles ($153 to $1,530) under the law. The first conviction was of a protester in May. Activist Nikolai Alexeyev has appealed to the European Court of Human Rights over the case.

Milonov is a controversial figure, who besides authoring the anti-gay law has also engaged in a campaign to "defend children from atheism," proposing to create a special group to preserve traditional values.

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