

Priest 'Beat' 2 Elderly Women in Fight for Parking Spot

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A St. Petersburg priest has been suspended from his duties, a church official said Wednesday, after he was accused of attacking two elderly women with his fists and car keys in a fight over a parking spot.

Church and police officials are investigating the allegations against Sergei Frunza, a protodeacon at the St. Peter and Paul's Cathedral on Piskarevsky Proyezd, and he may be defrocked if they are confirmed, a spokesman for St. Petersburg's metropolitan told The Moscow Times on condition of anonymity.

The 34-year-old suspect, driving a Hyundai Getz, inflicted concussions and multiple bruises to the two women, aged 60 and 66, during the confrontation early Sunday afternoon in Vsevolozhsk, a town just outside of St. Petersburg in the Leningrad region, police said in a [statement](#) Wednesday.

The argument over the parking space turned physical after one of the women struck a window

of the Hyundai with her hand and slapped Frunza on the face, the statement said, citing an account provided by Frunza.

The car keys left a 1.5-centimeter gash in one of the women's lips, Komsomolskaya Pravda [reported](#).

Police did not identify the trio or that the suspect was a priest, saying instead that he headed a private company.

Police spokeswoman Tatyana Denisyuk refused to name the suspect or the company he heads when reached by telephone.

But the church spokesman and one of his accusers, Valentina Pavlova, 60, confirmed that the suspect was Frunza.

No one was available for comment by telephone at the St. Peter and Paul's Cathedral.

It was not clear whether Frunza might be charged and, if so, what criminal punishment he might face.

Pavlova told Komsomolskaya Pravda in a video interview that the priest had shouted at her and her friend during the confrontation that the police would not touch him.

When Pavlova's relatives went to Frunza's house to seek an apology, Frunza said: "Well, sorry, such things happen. This is the way I am," the newspaper reported.

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