

Priest Loses License After BMW Crash

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Igumen Timofei

A priest suspected of crashing a BMW Z4 with Maltese diplomatic plates into two other cars, causing thousands of dollars in damage, has been stripped of his driver's license for 20 months because he refused to take an alcohol test following the incident, Interfax reported.

An investigation into the crash, which occurred in July, is still ongoing. Eyewitnesses said at the scene that the priest, a senior clergyman at Moscow's Church of the Holy Prophet Ilya, was drunk.

At a hearing on Wednesday in Moscow's Zamoskvoretsky district, a judge read out a police statement that a computer virus had destroyed video evidence showing priest Timofei, whose civilian name is Alexei Podobedov, talking with officers after the crash.

The priest's lawyer has insisted that his client was not intoxicated but was ill, and had borrowed the car from the Maltese Embassy strictly for work purposes.

Media reports have also said a Cadillac Escalade that belonged to the church and was used as the priest's service car had been repeatedly cited for speeding.

But a driver employed by the church, Yury Belyakov, told the court Wednesday that he always drove the Cadillac and the priest never did, Interfax reported.

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