

Vandals Attack Cross Over Rasputin Memorial

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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User upor_rogum posted pictures of the damaged monument on his LiveJournal blog hours after the news broke Tuesday.

Unidentified vandals attacked a wooden cross dedicated to Orthodox mystic Grigory Rasputin on the grounds of former imperial palace Tsarskoye Selo, outside St. Petersburg.

Security guards on the estate, now an open-air museum, told Interfax that the vandals had taken a saw to the memorial Monday and that the damaged cross had been moved to the museum for safekeeping.

The guards said they were not responsible for looking after the memorial because it was mysteriously erected on the edge of the estate seven years ago without the permission of museum authorities.

Rasputin, who acquired a reputation as a psychic and faith healer in the early 20th

century and became a close adviser to the wife of the last tsar, Nicholas II, is a controversial figure, and a definitive account of his murder in 1916 in St. Petersburg's Yusupov Palace remains elusive.

After his death, the imperial family allowed Rasputin to be buried in a bell tower at Tsarskoye Selo, but his remains were later removed, burned and scattered elsewhere after the 1917 Revolution.

Monday's attack on the memorial follows two cross-felling episodes in recent weeks. Earlier this month, vandals chopped down one Orthodox cross in the Altai republic and nine in the Leningrad region.

President Vladimir Putin on Tuesday said attacks on religious traditions showed that the Russians were losing spirituality.

"There are losses of Christian clergymen and of other confessions. Very recently there was yet another crime committed against a spiritual leader in Dagestan. What does this mean? It means, unfortunately, that there is a substantial loss of our national spiritual code. It's worrying," Putin told the presidential cultural council, Interfax reported.

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