

Governor Urged to Apologize for Comments About St. Petersburg Residents

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Lawmaker Vadim Tyulpanov advised St. Petersburg Governor Georgy Poltavchenko to apologize for derogatory comments he made about the city's residents after they sparked a major scandal, Interfax reported Tuesday.

Tyulpanov represents St. Petersburg in the Federation Council, the parliament's upper house.

Earlier this month, Poltavchenko called St. Petersburg residents "louts," referring to their behavior during a recent visit by Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev.

The prime minister's cortege caused a huge traffic [jam](#), with drivers protesting by honking their horns and showing obscene gestures — a common situation in Russia, where top officials fuel public resentment by disrupting traffic.

The governor's comments went viral on social networks and further dented Poltavchenko's image in the city, some of whose residents are unhappy that they lack the right to elect their own city chief — a status St. Petersburg shares with Moscow.

On Saturday, fans of the local Zenit football club [chanted](#) at a match attended by the governor, "the governor is a lout" and "sell your dacha, build a stadium" — a reference to Poltavchenko's statement in October that fans should use their own funds to help build a football stadium, which was later retracted.

Nevasport, an online publication, reported Monday that St. Petersburg authorities have told police to track down the fans who shouted the slogans. Nevasport did not cite any specific sources.

St. Petersburg — along with Moscow — has experienced the largest protest rallies in the country since December 2011.

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