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TV Channels Passing Blame Over Leaked Medvedev Comments

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After the 1 1/2-hour interview, Medvedev talked freely with journalists and called investigators "bastards" for staging a pre-dawn raid in the home of a director filming a series on the opposition.

Television channels were passing the blame Monday after unofficial footage from an interview with Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev was leaked Friday.

Footage that appeared on YouTube showed the prime minister just after the end of an hour-and-a-half interview, chatting freely with the journalists from the five channels that aired the show live.

In the five-minute video, Medvedev can be heard calling investigators "bastards" for staging a pre-dawn raid in the home of a director filming a series on the opposition movement.

That caused the Investigative Committee to issue an angry statement Saturday saying it was "very strange to hear comments that not only insult investigators ... but also undermine the

authority of all the country's law enforcement agencies."

The statement, which did not mention Medvedev by name and was signed by committee spokesman Vladimir Markin, was later removed from the agency's website, but remained accessible via Google cache Monday.

Medvedev's spokeswoman, Natalya Timakova, refused to comment on the incident. She merely told Vedomosti that it amounted to “eavesdropping on a conversation.”

The footage bears the logo of RT and apparently first appeared on one of the Kremlin-controlled English-language satellite channel's YouTube accounts.

RT editor Margarita Simonyan admitted that her station published the footage but said that the transmission was done automatically.

"We tried to stop it after the official part was over, but could not do this in time and could not edit [the footage] for more than two hours," she told Kommersant in an interview published Monday.

Simonyan said that she would write to YouTube to ask about the reasons for this. She added that the transmission was organized by "one of the national TV channels" without naming the channel.

An unspecified representative of VGTRK, the state media holding that includes Rossia-1 and Rossia-24, which broadcast the live interview, told the newspaper that the transmission had been organized by Channel One.

Channel One spokeswoman Larisa Krymova said the channel only recorded the interview, while the Ostankino TV Center was responsible for transmitting it to VGTRK.

The leak also included an almost two-minute segment showing Medvedev chatting with his interviewers just before the transmission started.

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