

# Gay Rights Activist Calls For Tolerance After New Murder

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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**The  Moscow Times**

Leading gay rights activist Nikolai Alexeyev has called for more tolerance in society following the murder of a man in Kamchatka, which could have been motivated by prejudice toward his sexual orientation, a news report said.

The body of the deputy director of Ozernoye Airport in Kamchatka region was found Sunday with signs of multiple stab-wounds in his burned-out car, Interfax reported.

According to one line of inquiry, the man could have been killed because of his "nontraditional sexual orientation." Police have arrested three local residents in connection with the murder, Ekho Moskvyy radio reported.

Alexeyev said that "society needs to be educated," adding that unbiased discussion was needed to stop hate crimes against sexual minorities and appealing to the authorities to stop using "homophobic rhetoric" in reference to the issue.

Speaking on behalf of the gay and lesbian community, Alexeyev voiced his opposition to the bill banning "homosexual propaganda" currently under consideration in the State Duma, a bill backed by President Vladimir Putin's allies, and promised more protests by gay activists against the bill.

Critics say the bill would effectively ban gay rights rallies and events. Alexeyev has said it is part of a "homophobic policy" that is giving Russians carte blanche to attack gays.

Putin has championed socially conservative values and the moral authority of the Russian Orthodox Church during his new term that began in May last year after a series of large street protests by mostly liberal Russians in big cities.

Putin has said Russia does not discriminate against gay people but has criticized them for failing to increase the population.

Russia plans to amend legislation to ensure foreign same-sex couples do not adopt Russian children, after Putin said last month that a French law allowing same-sex marriage went against traditional Russian values.

The issue of attacks on people from the homosexual community will also be raised at a gay parade that the activists are hoping to stage in St. Petersburg, Alexeyev said.

The recent murder in Kamchatka is the second such killing in the past month. On May 10, the badly mutilated body of a 23-year old man was found in Volgograd.

One of the two local residents detained in connection with the murder said he knew the victim, while police believe that the murder may have been motivated by intolerance of the victim's sexual orientation.

Homosexuality was decriminalized after the 1991 collapse of the Soviet Union, but a poll by the independent Levada Center last month found that 38 percent of Russians believe gay people need treatment and 13 percent said they should face prosecution.

*Material from Reuters has been included in this report.*

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