

Bolshoi Ballet Star Being 'Hounded Out' Over Acid Attack

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Tsiskaridze, speaking to reporters in Moscow last December, has been told his contract will not be renewed. **Vselovod Kuznestov**

MOSCOW, June 9 (RIA Novosti) — Ballet star Nikolai Tsiskaridze, who will have to leave the Bolshoi Theater at the end of the month, has said he is being harassed by the management over a conflict after an acid attack on the artistic director.

Russia's Bolshoi Theater announced Saturday that it would not sign a new contract with its premier dancer Tsiskaridze following months of legal disputes and scandals.

The dancer, who has been working with the Bolshoi for some 20 years, will have to leave the theater after June 30, when his current contract expires. He has been notified "that no new fixed-term employment contract will be prolonged," the theater's spokesperson said.

"Only one word — hounding," Tsiskaridze told RIA Novosti, declining to discuss the details.

Nikolai
Tsiskaridze says
he has been
“hounded out”
by the theater’s
management.

In interviews given in late January, Tsiskaridze accused the Bolshoi administration of "deliberate persecution" against him, as well as of using the acid attack on the ballet troupe's artistic director Sergei Filin that shocked the world in January as a pretext to deal with Tsiskaridze and other "unwanted" figures. The theater's management dismissed the statement.

In February, the dancer was reprimanded twice for giving interviews without obtaining permission from the theater's management. Tsiskaridze had earlier criticized the results of the theater's six-year renovation work.

The theater was earlier involved in a bitter and public legal dispute with dancer Anastasia Volochkova, who was fired in 2003, reportedly for being overweight. Although a court in 2004 ordered Volochkova's reinstatement and she is still officially employed by the theater, she has not secured any roles since 2004.

In March, she added fuel to the fire of the scandal at the Bolshoi by claiming that the theater pimps out its ballerinas to wealthy Russian businessmen. The theater's director, Anatoly Iksanov, dismissed the allegations.

"Chaos in the Bolshoi continues. They are getting rid of Tsiskaridze. It seems that Iksanov has more fans," Volochkova wrote on Twitter.

Meanwhile, the dancer's fans plan to stage a picket in his support on Theater Square in front of the Bolshoi Theater on June 15. They intend to apply to City Hall for permission to hold the event.

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