Man Beaten in Bar for 'Looking Gay'

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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A birthday party was attacked at a central Moscow bar frequented by expats over the weekend because the partygoers "looked gay," opposition politician and journalist Vera Kichanova said Monday.

Kichanova, who attended the party, said the brawl started at the Kamchatka bar at 7 Kuznetsky Most when a woman shouted a gay slur at one of her friends and started hitting him.

"Another woman came over and then three other men joined in. At that point there were five of them beating my friend, who was lying on the floor with his hands covering his head," Kichanova said by phone.

Kichanova, 22, who writes for the website Slon and was elected Russia's youngest and first libertarian lawmaker for a Moscow neighborhood in March 2012, tried to break up the fight. But she was punched multiple times in the stomach before she and her husband were removed by bar security guards, who then allowed the fight to continue, she said.

"It was clear the security guards were on the side of the aggressors," she said.

A woman who picked up the phone at Kamchatka said the brawl had occurred on the street outside the bar and therefore the bar had nothing to do with it. She did not give her name.

But Kichanova said that once she and her friends left the bar, they saw their attackers celebrating on the bar's porch.

Later, they received threatening messages via text and Vkontakte from a man who identified himself as Armen and said he was one of the attackers. He warned them not to come back because "they looked gay" and that he and his friends "beat gays like them half to death," according to Kichanova's Twitter posting.

Kichanova has filed a complaint with the police, who are questioning eyewitnesses.

In addition to serving as a lawmaker in the Yuzhnoye Tushino neighborhood, Kichanova was an active participant in Russia's recent protests and received the National Endowment for Democracy's 2013 Democracy Award in Washington.

Kamchatka is known for its cheap beer and is popular in young Russian and expat circles. It is owned by restauranteur Arkady Novinkov, who is actively campaigning for Moscow's incumbent mayor, Sergei Sobyanin.

LGBT rights in Russia have received global attention following the passage of a national law banning so–called gay propaganda. Human rights groups have criticized the law for creating a hostile environment towards members of the LGBT community.

When asked on Dozhd television if the law could be blamed for the attack, Kichanova replied: "I didn't think so before ... but if they didn't hesitate to write about it afterward [via text message and Vkontakte], then they really feel they can attack whoever they want and walk around afterward as if they had medals around their necks."

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