

Terek Grozny Demand Chechen Flag Burners Be Punished

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Russian soccer team Terek Grozny has appealed to the country's soccer association to punish Zenit St. Petersburg fans who reportedly set fire to the Chechen flag during this weekend's Premier League match in the northern city.

The incident occurred during the second half of Saturday's game, which finished 2-0 to Zenit, Terek's website stated.

"Today, we have officially appealed to all Russian football structures with a request to investigate this incident, find and punish the culprits," the statement said.

"It's not particularly difficult. Their faces are clearly visible in photos and videos. We also expect an apology from Zenit soccer club," it added.

The Russian Premier League's executive director, Sergei Cheban, said police were

investigating and blamed the incident on "two hooligans" as opposed to "Zenit fans" as a group.

"I'm very pleased that Zenit's security reacted instantly," he said, adding that the suspects were "blocked in, localized, the flag was taken from them and the police are involved."

Zenit fans face persistent criticism over their behavior, periodically accused of racism and homophobia. Terek is from Chechnya, part of Russia's mainly Muslim North Caucasus in the south of the country.

Zenit were handed a 3-0 technical defeat by the Russian soccer association last season, when a flare was thrown onto the pitch from their fan sector that injured Dynamo Moscow goalkeeper Anton Shunin.

Later, a predominant Zenit fan club issued a statement calling for an outright ban on signing black or gay players. Zenit has denied running a policy against acquiring black players.

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