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Striptease Dancers Investigated for Using Russian Flag (Video)

By The Moscow Times

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Striptease girls dancing with Russian flags in Chelyabinsk. Caution: Content is suggestive but shows no nudity.

Three dancers who wrapped Russian flags around their bare breasts during a Urals striptease show could face jail time if investigators conclude that they desecrated a state symbol.

Video footage of the hotel show, where the young women wore only silk shorts and boxing gloves, caught the attention of Chelyabinsk investigators when it was posted online this week.

"Information surfaced on the Internet ... that participants of a striptease show at the Uralskiye Zori hotel in Chelyabinsk engaged in activities that might have desecrated the Russian national flag," said a senior local investigator, Vladimir Shishkov.

"Given the evidence, we have opened an investigation," he said in comments published Thursday in the government newspaper Rossiiskaya Gazeta.

He did not say whether the unidentified women might be charged with desecrating the flag, a crime that carries a maximum punishment of one year in prison. Under the law, desecration of the white, blue and red flag includes wrongly removing it from its place at a state agency, writing on it, or engaging in other "deliberate acts of hooliganism" against the tricolor.

In video footage posted on YouTube, the three women are seen with the flags wrapped around their bare chests and kicking up their feet to a thumping remix of British rock band Queen's hit "We Are the Champions." After a while, the women toss aside the flags and continue their routine, with their red-gloved hands always covering their breasts.

Judging by viewer comments published online, people are more offended that the flags were flung aside carelessly than that they were used in the dance. Sports columnist Alexander Slavutin opined that the dancers were merely copying the actions of boxers who wrap themselves in the flags of their home countries at international tournaments, Rossiiskaya Gazeta said.

This week's furor comes after U.S. punk rock band Bloodhound Gang was banned from Russia in August for a flag stunt. A band member shoved a Russian flag into his underwear and pulled it out at the back during a concert in Odessa, Ukraine, angering Russian authorities and causing them to pull the plug on the band's concerts in Russia.

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