

Activist Takes Sitcom Star to Court For Saying Gays Should Be Put in Ovens

By [Christopher Brennan](#)

January 30, 2014



Ivan Okhlobystin said that gay people should be burned alive in ovens.

A gay activist said that he is taking Russian sitcom actor Ivan Okhlobystin to court for saying that gay people should be burned alive in ovens.

Activist's Nikolai Bayev's Facebook post was accompanied by a statement from his lawyer, who said that a pretrial hearing was scheduled for Feb. 17 in a Moscow district court.

Lawyer Andrei Zaitsev said in his statement that Bayev had experienced "moral suffering" as a result of statements made by Okhlobystin to a Novosibirsk audience in December and had also been made to feel "fear, anxiety and inferiority" in addition to a belittlement of his dignity.

The plaintiff is asking for a mandated apology and 30,000 rubles (\$850) for moral damages.

Okhlobystin, a former Russian Orthodox priest who has also called for a referendum

on reinstituting the Soviet Union's ban on homosexuality, responded to the legal action on his Twitter account, saying "A [anti-gay slur] sues a priest?! Is this Russia or what?" He suggested that the activist withdraw the suit and commented, "the defense of 'honor and dignity'? Whose? The oven's? Absurd."

Bayev said on his Facebook page that he holds little hope for Russian justice, but that his goal was to go through the country's court system and take the case to the European Court of Human Rights and create a precedent for the "protection of LGBT rights in Russia."

Gay rights activist Nikolai Alexeyev said that a case was possible under Russian law but that the suit was doomed both domestically and at the ECHR, where he himself said he was filing an appeal against his conviction under Russia's "propaganda law." Alexeyev then criticized his fellow activist, saying that he was gathering "crumbs from the PR table of Okhlobystin."

The actor, famous for his role in a Russian take on the American comedy series "Scrubs," has repeatedly made headlines after his Novosibirsk comments. Earlier this month he left his position as creative director of the phone retailer Yevroset to become more involved in "public activities," after a campaign for his dismissal quickly built up a head of steam.

Original url:

<https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2014/01/30/activist-takes-sitcom-star-to-court-for-saying-gays-should-be-put-in-ovens-a31587>