

# Human Rights Watchdog Defends Professor Sacked Over Ukraine Article

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The Moscow State Institute of International Relations.

The Kremlin's human rights panel has denounced as illegal the dismissal of a philosophy professor from Russia's top university for aspiring diplomats for writing an article criticizing Russia's actions in Ukraine and likening it to Germany in 1938.

The presidential human rights council said in a statement on its website that Andrei Zubov's actions did not constitute a violation of the university's code of conduct, undermining the official grounds for his dismissal from the Moscow State Institute of International Relations, or MGIMO, last month.

The council said in its ruling that Zubov's dismissal went against the Russian Constitution, the labor code and a law on education.

Zubov was fired from his post in early March for writing an op-ed in newspaper Vedomosti

titled "This Has Already Happened" in which he compared Russia's possible occupation of Ukraine to the Nazi Anschluss of Austria in 1938.

The university said Zubov traveled to England following the annexation of Crimea and delivered a speech in which he condemned "Russia's aggression" and portrayed the move as only "a means to an end, the end goal of which is dangerous to Europe, Ukraine and the Russian people," Interfax reported.

In its defense of Zubov's dismissal and denying that it had violated the right to freedom of speech, the university said Zubov "knowingly and repeatedly" violated university policy despite several warnings and cited MGIMO's affiliation with the Foreign Ministry, saying it was expected to uphold the ministry's official views.

The MGIMO also said Zubov's statements were "causing outrage" and proving detrimental to the institution's learning environment.

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