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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

United Russia Politician Under Investigation for Drunken In-Flight Fighting

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State Duma deputy Alexander Khinshtein faces an investigation over reports that he drunkenly threatened airline attendants in Russia's latest alcohol-fueled onboard hullabaloo.

The incident occurred on May 29 on an Aeroflot flight from Mineralnye Vody in southern Russia to Moscow, when investigators say Khinshtein "presumably in an intoxicated state rudely violated public order, initiating fights with the flight attendants and provoking them," a statement released Tuesday on the Investigative Committee's website said.

The United Russia deputy is also accused of refusing to wear a safety belt, standing in the aisle and insulting other passengers, and at one point warning the flight attendants that he was dangerous, an apparent threat.

LifeNews published a video showing a man purported to be Khinshtein rudely berating a flight attendant and standing in the aisle despite being told to take his seat.

If a preliminary check by investigators finds the accusations against Khinshtein to be true, Moscow's Transportation Department of the Investigative Committee will seek approval from the State Duma to hold Khinshtein criminally liable, the statement said.

Khinshtein wrote on Twitter that he himself appealed to prosecutors to open a probe into the incident, acknowledging that his behavior was out of line but saying it did not cause any flight delay and Aeroflot had no complaints against him.

Contradictorily, however, he wrote on Twitter on Tuesday that the check into his behavior was "an attempt by [head of the Investigative Committee] Alexander Bastrykin to shut me up."

"This is the fourth attempt in the last few years by the head of the Investigative Committee to open a criminal case against me," Khinshtein wrote, saying he was being targeted for his outspoken criticism of the committee.

Khinshtein's alleged misconduct is just one in a long list of instances of drunken debauchery on flights. A State Duma deputy submitted legislation this week seeking to ban alcohol consumption on all flights, citing the frequency with which such incidents were occurring as cause for concern.

Russian media reported Monday that another United Russia deputy, Vadim Bulavinov, had been removed from a plane in an intoxicated state upon landing in Moscow.

Last December, a former deputy governor of the Chelyabinsk region was hit with hooliganism charges after his violent antics forced a Moscow-bound plane to make an emergency landing in Novosibirsk.

See also:

Drunk Russian Passengers Make Politician Call for Alcohol Ban on Flights

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