

Court Deems Parody Punk Song About Skinheads 'Extremist'

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A court in the Orlov region has banned a parody song by a Ukrainian punk-rock band after deeming it to be extremist, the anti-xenophobia watchdog Sova said Thursday.

Prosecutors had brought the song to the court's attention for lyrics that experts said were "aimed at inciting ethnic hatred, enmity and hatred toward a specific group of persons on the basis of origin," Sova said in a statement on its website.

The band Shmeli, or Bumblebee, said the song in question — titled "Skinhead Moscow Girls" — was meant to be a parody of skinhead bands and was written at the request of rocker Sergei Troitsky, otherwise known as "Spider," Sova reported.

Once the court's decision comes into effect, the relevant documents will be sent to the Justice Ministry to include the song on the federal list of extremist materials.

In accordance with Russian law, anyone found guilty of "inciting ethnic hatred" by disseminating or publishing extremist materials faces up to two years in prison.

Russia's law on extremism has been criticized ever since it took effect in 2002. Many say the vagueness of what constitutes "extremism" allows authorities to use the law as a political weapon to silence critics.

Shmeli — originally from Ukraine — has worked in Moscow since 1999 and has released more than 30 albums over the course of its 16-year career.

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