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Dolgov: U.S. Should Worry About Human Rights in Ferguson First

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"The tragic events in Ferguson that followed shortly after police gunned down an unarmed 18-year-old Afro-American, Michael Brown, are clear evidence of the high degree of tensions in U.S. society," said Konstantin Dolgov, the Foreign Ministry's commissioner for human rights.

Russia's Foreign Ministry lashed out this week at the U.S. over clashes between police and protesters in Ferguson, Missouri, saying the U.S. should take care of its own large-scale internal challenges instead of staging coups in what it sees as unfriendly countries on the false pretext of defending democracy and human rights.

"The tragic events in Ferguson that followed shortly after police gunned down an unarmed 18-year-old Afro-American, Michael Brown, are clear evidence of the high degree of tensions in U.S. society, which remains split along racial lines," Konstantin Dolgov, the Foreign Ministry's commissioner for human rights, democracy and rule of law, said in a statement Tuesday.

"While urging other countries to guarantee freedom of speech and not to suppress anti-government protests, the U.S. authorities at home are none too soft on those actively expressing discontent over persistent inequalities, actual discrimination and the situation of 'second class' citizens," Dolgov said.

Russian state-run media has devoted extensive coverage to the protests in Ferguson, running reports from the scene in heavy rotation. The government-funded English-language news network RT has called the city "a war zone."

LifeNews, a broadcaster widely believed to have ties to the Russian security services, said on its Twitter account that a rally in support of the Ferguson protesters had taken place in front of the U.S. Embassy in Moscow on Wednesday.

A picture posted by the TV channel showed several protesters holding posters calling for a "fair investigation" into the shooting that prompted the protests.

The LifeNews report had not been independently confirmed by the time of publication.

Russia and the U.S. have engaged in a ping-pong war of accusations regarding human rights abuse in recent years. The name-calling has intensified since the sides clashed over the political crisis in Ukraine.

In December 2011, Russia's Foreign Ministry published a report on human rights abuses around the world, criticizing the situation in the U.S. and EU in an apparent response to regular criticism of Russia in analogous reports issued annually by the U.S. and EU.

In 2012 the ministry published two separate reports about human rights in the U.S. and EU, and this May it produced a report called "The White Book" about rights violations in Ukraine, in which it accused protesters in central Kiev of violence and the newly installed Ukrainian government of attacking freedom of speech.

See also:

Man Arrested for Shooting at Turkish Embassy in Moscow

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