

Magazine Pays Homage to Embattled Russian Activists With Global Thinkers List

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November 18, 2014

The Moscow Times

Two Russian rights advocates have been included on Foreign Policy magazine's list of the top 100 leading global thinkers for their roles in raising contentious issues surrounding this year's Sochi Olympic Games.

LGBT rights defender Yelena Klimova and environmental activist Yevgeny Vitishko were included in the "advocates" section of the annual list published Tuesday "for training the Olympic spotlight on Russian dissent," Foreign Policy wrote.

Klimova — the founder of Deti-404, an online support group for gay teenagers — was charged in January under Russia's so-called "gay propaganda" law, which bans the "promotion of nontraditional sexual relations to minors." The charges — which were eventually dropped — came weeks before the Sochi Games, adding weight to calls to boycott

the event over the dire state of LGBT rights in Russia.

Russia's media watchdog said Monday that Klimova would face new charges for violating the gay law. (See story, Page 3.)

Vitishko, who exposed environmental damage linked to preparations for the Sochi Olympics, is currently in prison on a 2012 "hooliganism" conviction for allegedly damaging a fence surrounding the property of the Krasnodar region's governor. In February, a few days into the games, a court upheld an earlier decision sentencing him to three years behind bars.

Russia's presence on the list was the strongest in the "agitators" section, where the names of President Vladimir Putin, Kremlin ideologue Alexander Dugin and Alexander Borodai, former leader of Ukraine's self-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic, featured beside those of terrorist and jihadi leaders. Foreign Policy noted that through Russia's annexation of Crimea in March, Putin had "manifested Russia's destiny" at the expense of another country's territorial sovereignty.

Russian-Finnish oil tycoon Gennady Timchenko also made the list for "nailing the energy deal of the decade" in May. Timchenko, one of Putin's close allies who appeared on the United States' and Canada's sanctions list, helped Russia secure a \$400 billion deal to supply China with natural gas for 30 years.

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