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Russia's Slams U.S. Human Rights Record as Ferguson Riots Continue

By Allison Quinn

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A protester holding up a sign in front of the Ferguson police department Tuesday amid inflamed racial tensions.

As U.S. authorities deployed the National Guard to deal with riots in Ferguson, Missouri, Russia's state-run media and Foreign Ministry claimed that the protests reflected President Barack Obama's inability to handle his own domestic affairs and the U.S. administration's failure to protect human rights.

The events in Ferguson and nationwide protests in the U.S. — sparked by the decision Monday not to indict a white police officer who shot dead an unarmed black teenager last August — dominated much of Russia's state-run media reports Wednesday, with programs on state-run channel Rossia-24 and Vesti describing the situation as proof that racism still exists in the country.

Russia's Foreign Ministry chimed in on the situation with a typically scathing statement

urging U.S. authorities to focus on domestic problems rather than foreign affairs.

"The latest events in Ferguson are just another, very worrying signal for the American government that it is finally time to focus on their large-scale internal problems in the sphere of upholding human rights ... rather than engaging in baseless and futile mentoring and propagandistic moral preaching to other countries," said the statement, published late Tuesday.

Much of Russian media also compared events in Ferguson to last year's Maidan mass protests in Kiev that saw Kremlin-backed Viktor Yanukovych ousted from the Ukrainian presidency.

"Does Obama Have His Own Maidan?" the Komsomolskaya Pravda newspaper asked in its Wednesday issue. Another newspaper, Tvoi Den, dubbed the riots "Afromaidan."

Comparisons between Obama and Yanukovych were rampant on Twitter.

Anton Korobkov-Zemlyansky, a pro-Kremlin media personality, wrote late Tuesday: "Has Obama already announced a counter-terrorism operation? Or will Hillary [Clinton] do that after they get rid of him and send him to Rostov-on-Don [where Yanukovych fled to from Ukraine]?"

Many bloggers also drew parallels between the situation in Missouri with that in eastern Ukraine, with photoshopped images showing former rebel commander Igor Strelkin among the U.S. protesters and captioned, "The People's Republic of Missouri," a reference to two self-proclaimed, separatist republics in Ukraine's Donetsk and Luhansk regions.

More than 2,000 soldiers from the National Guard have been sent to Ferguson to restore order as rioters set cars alight and smash windows.

Protests were held Tuesday in major cities across the U.S., including Chicago, New York, Los Angeles, Atlanta, Boston, Portland and Cleveland.

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