Ultraconservative Lawmaker Hunts for Teens at Gay Club

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Vitaly Milonov

With the help of a local squad of riot police, controversial St. Petersburg lawmaker Vitaly Milonov fought his way into a local gay club as it hosted a large-scale debauchery festival Saturday night.

Milonov — who has gained international notoriety for his efforts to crack down on gay rights in Russia — stormed Central Station, one of the city's best-known gay clubs, after having purportedly received complaints from several parents that their underage children were trapped in the venue and unable to escape. The lawmaker came accompanied by a film crew from local news site Fontanka.ru.

The club was hosting a Loshadka party, a legendary late-night festival rife with all manner of hedonism. "Craziness, scandal and sex" are promised in advertisements for Loshadka parties, whose past attendees have included fashion designer Giorgio Armani and photographer Mario

Testino, according to organizers. The main condition for entry into the party is to come decked out as flamboyantly as possible.

Milonov, who came dressed in plain clothes and a newsboy cap, was denied entry into the club, which was being guarded by several muscular bouncers.

He then called up a squad of riot police for assistance securing entry into the building. With police backup, Milonov managed to get inside the venue, where he proceeded to check attendees' documents en masse. Several minors were apparently found, the youngest of whom was a 15-year-old girl, FlashNord news agency reported.

"We found around 20 teenagers there that were practically having sex on the stage," Milonov told Baltinfo news agency.

While Milonov was inside the club, a brawl erupted between his supporters — a St. Petersburg city lawmaker among them — and the clubbers. Police did not intervene in the fight, Fontanka.ru reported

The teenagers were taken down to the local police station, while the party carried on despite Milonov's protests.

Milonov claimed that one of the bouncers hit the youngest party-goer as she tried to escape the club. "A 15-year-old girl went to the club and saw what a 15-year-old girl should never see. She tried to leave, but the guards wouldn't let her. One of them struck her," he said, Baltinfo reported. He then vowed to turn to city prosecutors in hopes of shutting down the club and launching a criminal case into the beating.

Milonov was one of the most vocal supporters of the gay propaganda law, which was passed federally in Russia in 2013. The law prohibits "propaganda of non-traditional relations" among minors.

In November, Milonov told the Russian News Service that Russia's confrontation with the West over Ukraine presents the best opportunity for Russian gays to leave the country by seeking asylum in the U.S. or Europe.

"This situation even gives these people the possibility to claim social benefits [in the West]," he said.

Russian senator Konstantin Dobrynin requested in November that a criminal investigation be carried out in connection with Milonov's activities. Dobrynin also called for Milonov to undergo a forced mental health examination.

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