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Siberian Publications Hit With Extremism Warning for Nazi Symbols

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Russia's 2002 anti-extremism law has been criticized for leaving the definition of what constitutes extremism entirely up to prosecutors.

Prosecutors in the Siberian region of Krasnoyarsk have issued extremism warnings to two publications that published images of swastika symbols on their websites.

The two publications, Gorodskiye Novosti and Newslab, had published photos of a defaced war memorial on Jan. 21 to illustrate an article about the criminal case opened against the offenders. Since the photos of the vandalized monument showed Nazi swastikas, prosecutors deemed this to be "signs of extremism" on the part of the publications.

"Specialists have concluded that the public demonstration of Nazi symbols on monuments to war liberators and workers on the home front during wartime are propaganda of a nationalistic, neo-Nazi ideology with a blasphemous character; it contradicts long-held beliefs and assessments [of World War II] and insults the feelings of most people," regional prosecutors said in an online statement Thursday.

Russia's 2002 anti-extremism law has been criticized for leaving the definition of what constitutes extremism entirely up to prosecutors. In 2012, the State Duma passed legislation taking that law a step further by allowing authorities to extrajudicially block websites featuring "extremist" content.

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