The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Russian Institute Apologizes After Senior Employee Cheers Nemtsov Death

March 02, 2015



The Moscow Institute of Physics and Technology.

A leading Russian academic institute has apologized for a "deeply flawed" comment made by one of its deputy deans who cheered the killing of opposition leader Boris Nemtsov.

The apology followed an open letter by about two dozen students and alumni of the Moscow Institute of Physics and Technology — known as MFTI or Fiztekh — who expressed outrage at remarks made by Vladimir Talismanov, a deputy dean of molecular and chemical physics.

"We, students, alumni and instructors of MFTI are used to Fiztekh being an institute of high standards — not only academic ones, but also moral and ethical ones," read the letter, which was posted Sunday on the institute's online student portal.

"We acknowledge the right of Vladimir [Talismanov] to express his opinions, even if his sense of tact does not force him to keep his opinion private at a moment like this. But we believe that any death should be viewed only as a tragedy, and in no other way," the letter said.

The authors of the letter also offered their apologies to Nemtsov's son Anton, who is a student at the institute, on behalf of "those who were incapable of acting decently."

In a post on the VKontakte social network that has since been deleted, Talismanov cheered the death of Nemtsov, who was shot dead near the Kremlin on Friday night and whose death lead tens of thousands of Muscovites to march Sunday in his memory.

According to the text quoted in the student letter, Talismanov's post read: "Americans created this scum themselves, financed it, and they took it out themselves. Such is the fate of all prostitutes. [As of Friday] there is one less scumbag."

The administration of MFTI has offered its apologies to Nemtsov's loved ones for the "deeply flawed and provocative comment" by its deputy dean, said a post on its official VKontakte page. There was no mention of whether Talismanov would face any disciplinary action.

The march in Nemtsov's memory in Moscow on Sunday drew some 50,000 people, according to organizers, and additional mourning gatherings convened in dozens of other cities.

But after months of the government denouncing opposition activists as "traitors" and the "fifth column," some of the marches were reportedly met with attacks by pro-Kremlin vigilantes.

About 100 people who gathered to honor Nemtsov's memory in the western city of Voronezh were accosted by activists who splashed an antiseptic, known as brilliant green, at the speakers, according to a Twitter post by one of the rally's participants.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2015/03/02/russian-institute-apologizes-after-senior-employee-cheers-nemtsov-death-a44347