

Russian Investigative Committee Opens Criminal Case Over Purported Harvard Remarks

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Yury Romanenko

Russia's Investigative Committee announced Tuesday it had opened a criminal case against a Ukrainian political scientist whom it accuses of having advocated for the murder of Russian journalists in eastern Ukraine during a conference at Harvard University.

In April, Ukrainian political scientist Yury Romanenko posted on Facebook some of the comments he claims to have made at Harvard University.

"The Ukrainian army must selectively and carefully kill Russian journalists who are covering the situation in Donbass [eastern Ukraine]," Romanenko wrote on Facebook on April 5. "Snipers from the Ukrainian army should be told that people wearing helmets featuring the word 'Press' are priority targets."

He later explained in an article he penned for Ukrainian news site hvylya.net that his words were meant to spark discussion with his American interlocutors. In that article, he referred to the exchange as part of a "discussion," but made no reference to a conference, which the Investigative Committee described the exchange as having been a part of in its complaint.

Romanenko's Facebook post caught the attention of Russia's Investigative Committee, which launched a case against him for the incitement to hatred and enmity.

"The Investigative Committee did not use any sources other than what I had written on my Facebook page," Romanenko told The Moscow Times on Tuesday. "This says a lot about the Investigative Committee as an organization."

Romanenko also said that the "conference" the Investigative Committee claimed he had spoken at was in fact a private encounter on campus grounds.

By the time of publication, Harvard University was unable to confirm or deny that Romanenko had spoken at the institution.

In March, the Investigative Committee opened a criminal case against Robert Scales, a retired American major general and a military analyst for Fox News, after he said on air that the United States could only influence the Ukrainian crisis by killing Russians.

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