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Soccer Club Torpedo Moscow Racism 'Isolated Incidents,' Says President

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Torpedo Moscow fans watch their team play FC Rostov.

After a wretched season littered with racist incidents and fines, the president of Torpedo Moscow, whose cash-strapped club is on the verge of relegation, has written it all off as a series of isolated episodes and misunderstandings.

In September, Torpedo fans were found guilty of racially abusing Dynamo Moscow's Christopher Samba, while a number of black players from Rostov were on the receiving end two months later.

Zenit's Brazilian forward Hulk was also targeted during a match in March and during an away game against Arsenal Tula last month when Torpedo fans unveiled a banner with a Nazi symbol.

The club was fined a total of one million rubles ($20,000) for all four incidents and was forced to play a number of home matches behind closed doors.

"We have had a misunderstanding with a group of people who call themselves Torpedo supporters," club president Alexander Tukmanov said in a telephone interview.

"We asked them on a number of occasions if they wanted to attend a meeting with us to discuss the problems. But they believe that the team and the directors exist separately."

They are not the only club in Russia to have been found guilty of racism offenses. The Russian Football Union (RFS) has punished Spartak Moscow, while European governing body UEFA has disciplined CSKA Moscow.

"I do not think that racism is a massive occurrence in our football. I would call these isolated incidents," said Tukmanov, who was general director of the RFS from 1998 until 2005.

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