

Fake Beard, Priest Outfit Get Russian Journalist Sobchak Investigated

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Ksenia Sobchak

Investigators have opened an inquiry against journalist Ksenia Sobchak to determine whether she offended Christians' feelings by posting a photo of herself wearing a false beard and a clerical robe to promote a news report that she was working on.

The investigation into Sobchak, a socialite-turned-opposition journalist, was prompted by activist Yaroslav Mikhailov, according to a letter from the Investigative Committee that he posted on his Facebook page.

“Sobchak has crossed all boundaries of what is acceptable and has insulted the feelings of believers,” Mikhailov said on Facebook over the weekend, adding that she had committed a “violation of the right to the freedom of religion,” and demonstrated an “obvious disrespect for society.”

In the photo, Sobchak is seen standing in a doorway wearing religious vestments and a fake beard. She posted the picture on her Instagram page in April, writing that she and a colleague were working on a news report for Snob magazine and asking users to “guess what it is about.”



A photo posted by @xenia_sobchak on Apr 30, 2015 at 7:08am PDT

Comments on her Instagram page ranged from expressions of outrage to words of encouragement, while one social media user foresaw the upcoming Investigative Committee investigation by writing: “Hi, IC.”

Mikhailov said he filed his complaint on April 30, which was the day that Sobchak posted the photo online. The Investigative Committee responded in its letter by saying it would carry out the necessary checks and let Mikhailov know of the results.

In accordance with Russian law, it is a crime to publicly offend the feelings of religious believers, which carries a sentence of up to three years imprisonment.

The journalist and television host responded on Twitter to news of the inquiry with the Russian-language hashtag #большеада, meaning “more hell.”

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