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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Jesus Sculpture Made of Garbage Torn Down by Siberian Extremism Authorities

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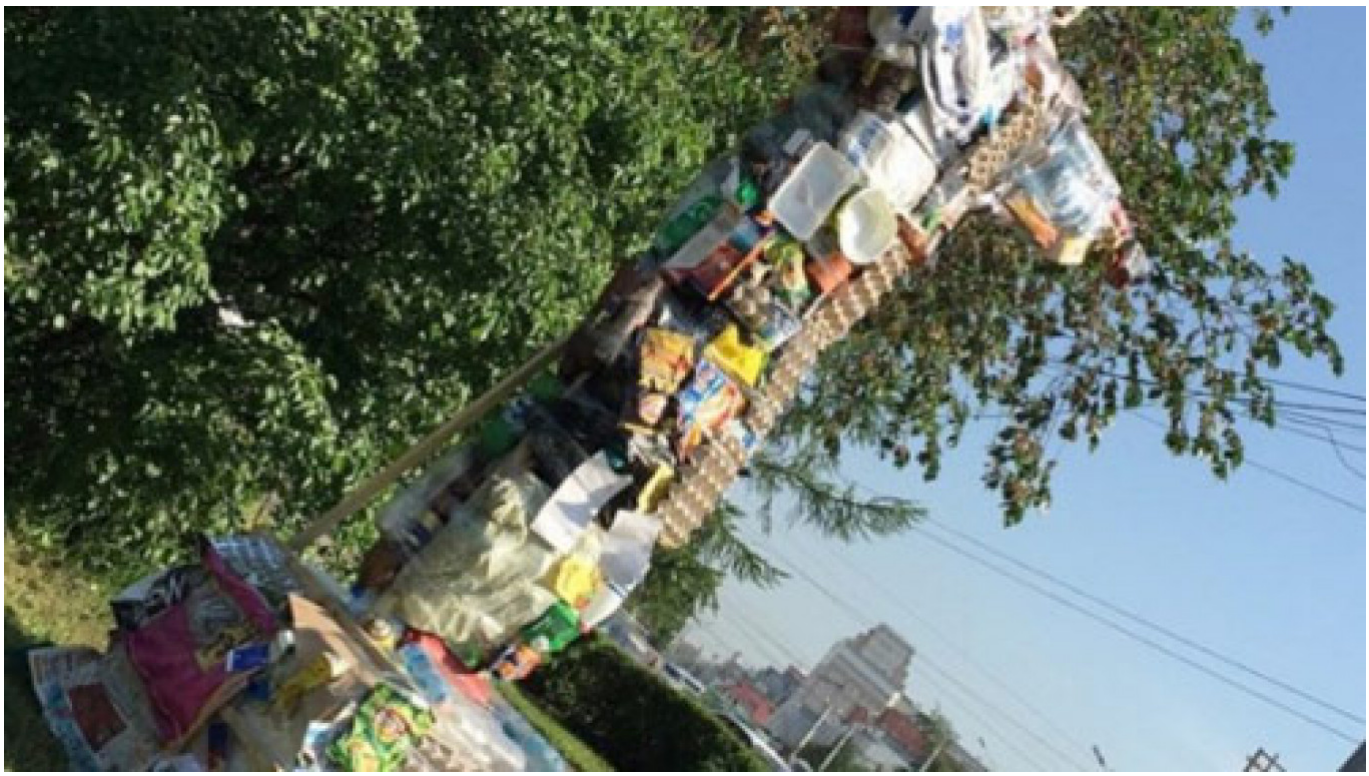

The sculpture had been set up as part of the “Space Multiplicity” art festival.

The Interior Ministry's Anti-Extremism Department ordered the demolition of a sculpture of Jesus Christ made of garbage in the Siberian city of Omsk following the complaints of the local diocese of the Orthodox Church, Russian media reported.

The sculpture had been set up as part of the "Space Multiplicity" art festival but was swiftly taken down after the Omsk diocese complained to authorities, local news site BK55 reported.

"I received a call from the anti-extremism center," BK55 quoted festival director Vasily Melnichenko as saying. "The Omsk diocese indignantly appealed to [authorities] about the sculpture."

The artists, Maria Shinkevich and Alyona Pozhilenko, were reportedly told that their 3-meter-tall sculpture had been demolished and disposed of.

Shinkevich was quoted by regional news site The Novosibirsk Room as saying that her

sculpture was meant to draw attention to the destruction of cultural and historical heritage, and was not meant to be offensive.

State intervention in the cultural field has been widespread in recent months. Earlier this year, Russian Orthodox activists complained about a production of Richard Wagner's "Tannhauser" opera, staged at the Novosibirsk Opera and Ballet Theater, claiming it offended the feelings of religious believers. Theater director Boris Mezdrich was fired over the scandal.

A number of Russian regions also banned screenings of the Oscar-nominated "Leviathan," a film about a provincial man's struggles against a corrupt mayor and Church officials. The film struggled to obtain a screening permit in the country, despite having received international praise.

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