The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Central Russian Officials Crack Down on Yoga in Bid to Stifle Spread of Occultism

June 28, 2015



Officials in the city of Nizhnevatrovsk reportedly fear that Hatha yoga is a practice with “an occult character.”

Officials in the central Russian city of Nizhnevartovsk have moved to prevent municipal buildings from hosting yoga classes in a stated bid to stifle the spread of religious cults, the Kommersant business daily reported.

Representatives of at least two of the city's Hatha yoga studios — the Aura and Ingara — have received letters outlining Nizhnevartovsk officials' plans to halt yoga classes in city facilities. Both schools rent out space at a stadium and public meeting hall called Samotlor.

One of the letters, seen by Kommersant and addressed from Nizhnevartovsk First Deputy Head Sergei Levkin to the head of social and youth policy Marianna Parfenova asks that she take all necessary measures to stop Hatha yoga lessons from taking place at the stadium.

The move is crucial "in order to prevent the spread of new religious cults and movements," reads the letter.

A second letter, sent to the heads of the departments for physical culture and education, refers to Hatha yoga as "inextricably linked to religious practices" and as having "an occult character," Kommersant reported Friday.

Hatha yoga is a branch of yoga that encompasses physical exercises and a focus on deep breathing.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2015/06/28/central-russian-officials-crack-down-on-yoga-in-bid-to-stifle-spread-of-occultism-a47733