The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Mayor of Russian City Threatens Local LGBT Community With Paratroopers

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July 02, 2015



Paratroopers celebrating their national holiday.

The mayor of Russia's northern city of Arkhangelsk said this week he would approve a gay parade in the city — but only if it is held on Aug. 2, an infamous paratroopers' celebration inevitably marked by drunken violence and displays of excess testosterone.

"The LGBT community is getting on my nerves. They've been asking us [to let them hold an event] for years now," Viktor Pavlenko was cited by the regional edition of Moskovsky Komsomolets newspaper as saying Wednesday at a meeting attended by journalists.

"This year our airborne forces celebrate their 85th anniversary, so on Aug. 2, we'll let them [the LGBT movement] go ahead for sure. I guarantee it. To let off steam," he said.

Airborne Forces Day in Russia is notorious for crowds of often drunk current and former paratroopers wearing blue berets and blue-and-white striped shirts roaming city streets and

parks across Russia. They drink outside all day long, fool around in fountains and often provoke fistfights, usually facing little resistance from the authorities.

On paratroopers' day in 2013, an LGBT activist in St. Petersburg was attacked by inebriated paratroopers for picketing on Palace Square, where the State Hermitage Museum is located. Police attempted to arrest the man who started the fight, but let him go after his fellow paratroopers stood up for him, video footage of the event posted online showed.

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