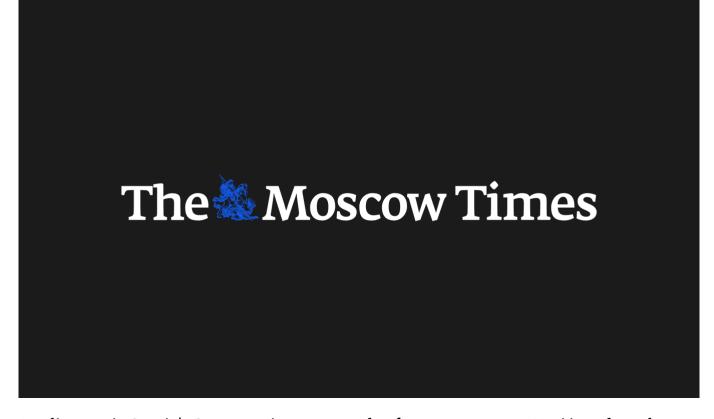


Russian Police Frame Man as Nazi to Boost Stats

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A policeman in Russia's Rostov region attempted to frame a man as a Nazi in order to boost local prosecution rates, a statement released by the Moscow-based SOVA Research Center said Tuesday evening.

The incident took place in January of last year, when the officer ■used a police database to find a Rostov resident previously convicted of inciting hatred online. The two struck a deal by which the officer ■would use the resident's VKontakte social network profile to post the ■swastika, and then pay the resident's inevitable fine.

However, the officer was unaware that the Rostov resident recorded ■their conversations. A local court found the officer guilty of abusing ■his power and of forgery. His sentence was eventually commuted and he ■was quickly pardoned.

The court heard that he had wanted to improve arrest statistics **\Z**related to Russia's anti-extremism laws, which carry fines and jail time **\Z** for spreading hate speech on the internet.

Ninety percent of all extremism-related convictions in 2015 involved ⊠internet activities, Alexander Verkhovsky, head of the SOVA Center, told the Moscow Times in March. More than half of those involved VKontakte.

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