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Blogger Who Filmed Himself Playing Pokemon Go at a Cathedral Could Face Prison

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Sokolovsky! / YouTube

Police have charged Ruslan Sokolovsky, the video blogger who filmed himself playing Pokemon Go inside a Yekaterinburg cathedral, with committing extremism and offending religious sensitivities. Sokolovsky has been detained and awaits trial on Sept. 3 to determine if he will be arrested, his lawyer says. If convicted, Sokolovsky could face several years in prison.

On Aug. 11, Sokolovsky published a video on his YouTube channel showing him entering the Church of All Saints in Yekaterinburg and playing Pokemon Go on his iPhone throughout the cathedral. In a short speech at the beginning of the video, Sokolovsky says he rejects warnings reported in the media that playing Pokemon Go in churches could result in a prison sentence.

"This is complete nonsense," Sokolovsky said, standing outside the Church of All Saints. "Who could get offended if you're just walking around with your smart phone in a church?"

Embed:

In mid-August, Valery Gorelykh, the regional police spokesperson, told local reporters that he personally wanted to see Sokolovsky sent to prison for "at least five years," arguing that an example should be made, to discourage more Pokemon Go players from committing such blasphemy.

In early 2016, Sokolovsky launched a self-titled atheist magazine, writing, "We have been inspired by Charlie Hebdo and have decided that there are also too few such publications in Russia that take an absolutely amoral approach to ridiculing the contemporary national reality. Using the written word to take on the censorship piling on from all sides and what's practically a police state now isn't a new idea, but it's just as relevant today as ever."

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