

State Advisor Calls on Russian National Guard to 'Butcher' Protesting Truck Drivers

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Zamir Usmanov / TASS

A Russian official has called for the country's National Guard to butcher truck drivers protesting against a controversial road tax.

Ruslan Akaev, an advisor to the Minister of Press and Information in the southern Russian republic of Dagestan, said that drivers who chose to block roads in protest against the unpopular Platon toll system should see their vehicles confiscated.

He said that the demonstrations obstructed ambulances and other citizens in need.

Embed:

Dagestani state advisor calls on Russia's National Guard to "break the faces" of protesting truckers and confiscate their vehicles. pic.twitter.com/taUBzZI18s

— Kevin Rothrock (@KevinRothrock) [April 6, 2017](#)

"Why are you making innocent people suffer?", Akaev wrote in a Facebook post on Thursday. "You're not men! You're animals! Can't you protest in any other way? I'm not a fan of "Platon" system, but I see your behavior as even worse! National Guard! Butcher these truck-driving freaks! Turn them to dust! Confiscate their vehicles! Break their brash faces! Protect the people! Please!"

The outburst follows the arrest of Rustam Mallamagomedov, the leader of the strike movement in Dagestan. Police detained him on Wednesday after taking part in a press conference in Moscow, releasing him a day later, according to police monitoring website OVD-Info.

In recent weeks, protest leaders in the Tula, St. Petersburg, Krasnodar, Chelyabinsk and Stavropol regions have all been either arrested or taken in for questioning.

Demonstrations against the Platon tax system have been held across Russia since late March. The tax, which was first introduced in November 2015, affects heavy vehicles traveling on federal highways.

The system initially required drivers of vehicles weighing more than 12 tons to pay 3.73 rubles (\$0.06) per kilometer traveled. Authorities reduced the toll by more than half following protests by drivers last year, but plans to increase the tax on Apr. 15 has sparked a new wave of demonstrations.

Organizers claim that an estimated 10,000 truck drivers from more than 70 Russian regions are ready to participate in protests across the country.

As of February 15, 2017, Platon had collected 20.6 billion rubles (\$367 million dollars) for the Russian budget according to Platon co-owner RT-Invest.

Platon is also partly owned by Igor Rotenberg — the son of President Vladimir Putin's close friend and judo sparring partner Arkady Rotenberg.

Related article: [Russian Truckers Obstruct Traffic in Nationwide Strike](#)

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