

Head of Russia's 'Pastafarian Church' Faces Expulsion at School

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Pixabay, edited by The Moscow Times

Mikhail Samin, better known as Pasta Himself IV, the 17-year-old head of the “Russian Pastafarian Church,” says his high school principal is threatening to expel him, after state investigators twice summoned her to discuss Samin’s participation in the March 26 anti-corruption protests organized by Alexei Navalny.

Writing on the social network Vkontakte, Samin says Principal Veronika Burmakina has given him an ultimatum: enroll at another school, or agree not to miss class for any reason, not even to attend the annual “Positive Hack Days” computer security conference held later this week in Moscow.

“I think she [Burmakina] will be able to solve two problems this way: she’s already been summoned twice by the Investigative Committee, and the best school in Moscow apparently doesn’t have any need for this suspicious student,” Samin said of himself, [speaking to the website TJournal](#).

Russian Pastafarians' leader says he still plans to attend the PHDays conference, where he and several classmates placed second in a "Capture the Flag" computer security competition.

Samin says his parents don't approve of his decision to publicize his situation at school, but he told TJournal that he wants to make it harder for Burmakina to take similar actions against other students.

Burmakina refused to speak to TJournal about Samin's accusations.

On March 26, thousands of demonstrators joined nationwide anti-corruption protests, organized by presidential hopeful Alexei Navalny. The demonstrators attracted many young people, leading to a series of incidents at schools and universities across the country, where teachers and lecturers berated students for supporting Navalny's anti-corruption activism.

In November last year, the Justice Ministry rejected the Russian Pastafarian Church's application to be registered as an official religious organization, saying that the group's charter failed to correspond to Russian regulations.

The organization is a Russian chapter of the Church of the Flying Spaghetti Monster, created in January 2005 by atheist Bobby Henderson as a social movement against creationism in American schools. The movement is legally recognized as a religion in the Netherlands and New Zealand, where Pastafarian representatives can perform marriage ceremonies.

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