

Russian Ethics Committee Frowns on Homophobic Lawmaker's Harassment of LGBT Rights Activists

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Dmitri Lovetsky / AP

The State Duma's Ethics Committee has slapped the wrist of Vitaly Milonov, the deputy best known for spearheading Russia's ban on "gay propaganda." On May 1, Milonov harassed a group of LGBT rights demonstrators at a parade in St. Petersburg.

Otari Arshba told the news agency Interfax that police received four different complaints about Milonov's behavior during the May 1 parade, when the lawmaker followed gay rights activists, shouting insults at the crowd.

"We've already had private conversations with our colleague, Milonov. I warned him yesterday that we plan to examine this issue. As a first step, we decided to 'admonish' him. If this [behavior] happens again, the commission has agreed to summon him for another discussion," Arshba said.

According to the news site Fontanka, Milonov followed a group of LGBT rights activists on May 1, later inserting himself into the middle of the crowd, shouting criticisms of gay people. Milonov's outbursts led to some shoving and chants of "Milonov is a disgrace to Russia," before police officers removed the lawmaker from the group. Later that same day, however, he returned to the parade and shouted again at the demonstrators.

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