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Russian Feminist Reports Facing Extremism Probe For 'Inciting Hatred Toward Males'

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Lyubov Kalugina / Vkontakte

A Russian feminist blogger has told rights organizations that she is being suspected by investigators of inciting hatred toward men in social media posts.

Anti-extremism legislation is regularly used against social media users accused of fomenting racial or religious hatred in Russia. Until recently, the country's tough anti-extremism laws were rarely applied to gender-related posts, the MBKh news website cited rights groups as saying.

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Lyubov Kalugina, who describes herself as a "radical feminist of a separatist breed," told the SOVA Center anti-extremist group that investigators had summoned and warned her that she risked facing an extremism charge for 12 posts she had made in 2013-2016.

Kalugina said that the Omsk branch of the Investigative Committee had warned her during an interview last week that she may be facing a criminal hate speech case following a pre-investigation check.

In comments to the Mediazona news website, Kalugina said that she had been summoned in 2017 by police, who said that a resident from the city of Birobidzhan had complained that her social media posts insulted him "as a representative of the 'male' social group."

"I was aware that there was a certain risk, but I didn't think such stupidity would be included in the [investigation's] materials. I didn't think that you couldn't even joke," she told Mediazona.

Kalugina warned that her case could "set a very bad precedent" that could land other feminists and activists in jail for social media posts.

"It's completely absurd to equate the silliest of jokes to calls after which people go and kill others," she wrote.

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