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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

New Russian #MeToo Flashmob Takes Twitter by Storm

Under the new #I_Need_Openness hashtag, female users share their stories of everyday harassment and abuse in the country.

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Sergei Kiselyov / Moskva News Agency

Russia's female Twitter users have started a movement to share stories of everyday harassment and abuse in the country, generating widespread support and some backlash from male users.

The #I_Need_Openness hashtag — #Mnye_Nuzhna _Glasnost in Russian in a nod to the reformation of the Communist Party in the 1980s — comes two years after the start of the #MeToo movement in the United States that was born in response to sexual assault accusations in Hollywood.

Russia largely turned a blind eye to #MeToo when it first gained prominence. The country decriminalized domestic violence in 2017, and several accusations of sexual assault against

public figures have gone nowhere.

Related article: Russia Had a #MeToo Moment

"*One woman will never be listened to, she is immediately surrounded by men who are ready to shut her up, but it is much more difficult to do the same with a group of women.*"

Internet blogger @Teacat_w, who launched the social media flashmob with another blogger, @fnck___you, said they had acted because they believe men in Russia do not want to hear about what they have done to women, and that therefore every time a woman starts to speak about abuses she has suffered she is ridiculed and accused.

“One woman will never be listened to, she is immediately surrounded by men who are ready to shut her up, but it is much more difficult to do the same with a group of women,” she told The Moscow Times.

Under the new hashtag, users opened up about experiencing groping on the metro, catcalling and being afraid of walking alone at night for fear of rape.

Embed:

> #мне_нужна_гласность потому что меня в забитом вагоне метро облапал мужик лет 45. я пыталась убедить себя, что кто-то наваливается на меня сзади и прикасается случайно, из-за давки, но весь мой оптимизм рассеялся, когда я почувствовала, что меня схватили за жопу рукой
>
> — беспонтовый пирожок (@splyukrepko) July 17, 2019

— "#I_Need_Openess because once a 45-year-old man touched me in a crowded subway. I tried to convince myself that someone was piling on me from behind and touching accidentally, because of the crowd, but all my optimism disappeared when I felt a hand on my butt."

Embed:

> некоторые думают, что если тебе на улице улюлюкают вслед, то значит ты классно выглядишь, это как комплимент
> блять, да нихуя
> это страшно и неприятно
> у тебя потом такое дерьмовое чувство и ты вспоминаешь это спустя год и два и пять лет #мне_нужна_гласность

— ▪▪▪▪▪▪▪▪▪▪▪ (@_cool_air_) July 16, 2019

— "Some people think that if you are on the street and receive attention, it means that you look just great, that it's a compliment
it is fucking not
it's scary and unpleasant
after that you have such a bad feeling and you remember it a year, two and five years later
#I_Need_Openess"

“The world is so cruel and deaf that women have to yet again arrange these things to inform the public of the serious and widespread problem of rape,” another user wrote.

Twitter users were divided into those who championed and those who criticized the hashtag.

“Young women: telling of male abuse on a staggering scale, to be heard, supported and to know they’re not alone.

Men: hahaha, the feminists are pressing on again, oh well, we’ll laugh and mock. They’re exaggerating after all and rape/violence is NORMAL,” one user tweeted to sum up the debate.

Less than 24 hours after launching the flashmob, @Teacat_w said she plans to catalog the collected stories “into a separate place where you’ll have access to everything that’s been written.”

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