

Russian Footballer Faces Punishment for Criticizing Putin's Virus Response

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Yevgeny Frolov said that Putin has failed to take tangible action to support businesses and the population amid the health crisis. vk.com/rpl

A Russian football player for FC Krylia Sovetov in the city of Samara faces punishment from his team after he harshly criticized President Vladimir Putin and other Russian authorities over their response to the coronavirus pandemic.

Goalkeeper Yevgeny Frolov, 32, made the comments in a Sunday [interview](#) with sports journalist Sergei Yegorov. He described the Russian authorities' response toward the coronavirus crisis as inconsistent and accused Putin of making “nonsense” statements and empty promises.

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In a statement Monday, FC Krylia Sovetov [said](#) Frolov had violated the terms of his contract by giving an unauthorized interview and had damaged the team's interests as a result.

The Russian Premier League club added that it does not share Frolov's opinion and that the goalkeeper "will be punished according to the club's policy." The sports news website Championat.com [reported](#) that Frolov could be fined over his comments.

In his interview with Yegorov, Frolov said that Putin has failed to take tangible action to support businesses and the population amid the health crisis.

"What the president says on television is all nonsense. There are no real actions. When talking to real businessmen, one can learn that banks will never issue soft loans and will not give a [loan] delay. Credit holidays? They're not here. The president said 'you must,' but no one listens to him," the football player said.

He also accused some institutions, especially in Moscow, of working only "for themselves, for those who are in power," saying that "ordinary people" can only expect "fines and penalties."

"We are forced to stay at home, and there is no help from the state," he said. "Yes, and we are being fined [for going out]. People have no money, and the average fine is 5,000 [rubles]. People are going a second month in a row without a salary. This is not the case in Europe. And we see how our police work: They just twist people's hands or hit them in face and take them away."

"As in the days of serfdom, one has no rights or freedoms," he added. "You are a slave. At the same time, no lawmaker in the State Duma has offered to cut their own salaries," he said.

As of Tuesday, the Samara region has [confirmed](#) 272 cases of the infection and five coronavirus-related deaths. Nationwide, Russia has reported 93,558 coronavirus infections and 867 deaths.

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