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Popular Blogger Receives Threats for Criticizing Racism in Russia

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Maria Tunkara took to TikTok to dispute claims that racism doesn't exist in Russia amid anti-racism protests in the U.S. **youngmasha / Instagram**

A young mixed-race Russian blogger says she has faced a barrage of racist threats online after she posted a TikTok video criticizing racism in her country.

Maria Magdalena Tunkara, 22, took to the popular app to dispute widespread claims that racism doesn't exist in Russia amid a wave of anti-racism protests in the U.S. that have spread worldwide. In several subsequent videos, the latest of which appeared three days ago, Tunkara poked fun at derogatory comments left by other users.

Embed:

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Дорогой дневник, мне угрожают избиением и убийством. Когда мне говорят, что в России уже все хорошо и расизма не бывает, то я хочу показать как люди реагируют на мои посты или шуточные тиктоки, которые показывают сюрреализм происходящего. Поэтому в первый раз я попрошу помощи у вас и блогерского сообщества. Вы вступались за @andrewpetrov1 во время Пилы, а теперь защита нужна мне, одному из самых крупных блогеров, рассматривающих проблему расизма в России. Все же самоизоляция самоизоляцией, а на улицу мне иногда выходить надо. В карусели — пример того, что мне и обо мне пишут. От вас я прошу одного — репост данного поста на своей площадке. Давайте дадим огласку происходящему и вместе сделаем Россию чуть более безопасной.

A post shared by curly super masha (@youngmasha) on Jun 6, 2020 at 7:38am PDT

Tunkara, whose father is from Mali and mother from Ukraine, said these videos have been misinterpreted by right-wing nationalists as a mockery of Russians as a nationality.

“What I filmed and posted was absolutely neutral... I can’t say there’s anything offensive I should be killed for,” she told the MBKh Media news website in an interview published Monday.

“I would understand if I was criticized specifically for my activities, point by point, and provided arguments. But I’m being criticized for existing,” Tunkara said.

On Instagram, Tunkara shared screenshots of some of the threats she has been receiving, including references to “monkeys” and calls to inflict physical and sexual punishment on her.

“Dear diary, I’m being threatened with beatings and murder,” Tunkara wrote, urging other users to share her post on their accounts to make public the threats she faces.

Related article: Russians Watch the American Protests as Clouds Gather at Home

“I’m publishing these threats for the first time because people have crossed a line,” she told MBKh Media.

Tunkara recounted casual acts of racism dating back to her childhood, when an older schoolkid had beaten her, teachers made snide remarks and metro passengers yelled obscenities.

“It’s background noise in my life,” she told MBKh Media.

This is at least the second wave of threats she has received this year, with right-wing nationalists taking issue with her argument in February that crimes in Russia aren't committed mainly by migrants from Muslim-majority countries.

Less than 0.1% of Russia’s population of 146 million is thought to be black, according to estimates.

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