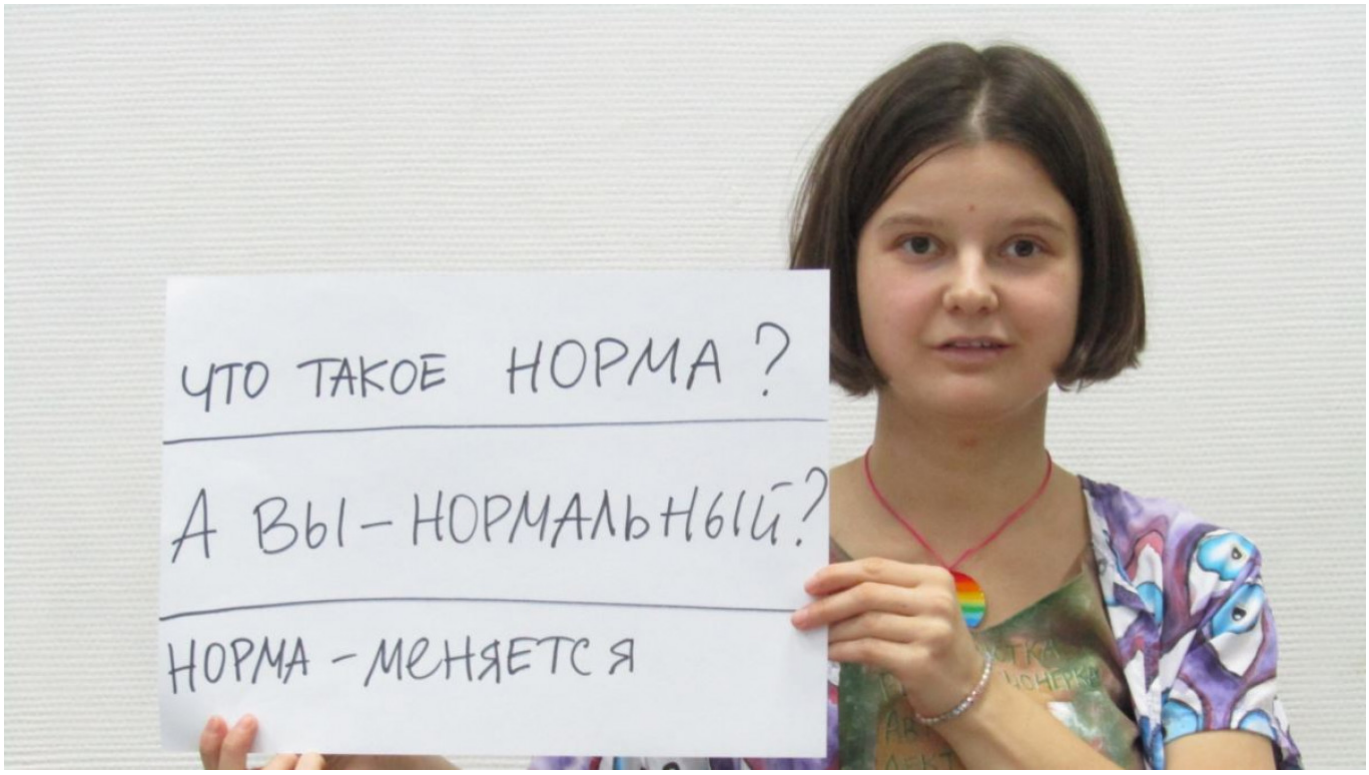
The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Russia Fines LGBT Activist for 'Gay Propaganda' Drawings

By AFP

July 10, 2020



The case has prompted protests in Russia. **Vkontakte**

A Russian court on Friday fined a LGBT activist 75,000 rubles ($1,053) over "propaganda" drawings of gay families aimed at influencing minors.

A magistrate's court in the far eastern city of Komsomolsk-On-Amur fined activist and artist Yulia Tsvetkova over social media posts of drawings, she told AFP.

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One, called "A family is where love is," shows gay couples with their children. Others depict rainbow-colored cats and matryoshka dolls holding hands.

Tsvetkova posted on Facebook her testimony in court where she said the drawings were posted on a social media group aimed at adults and marked 18+.

The 27-year-old also faces a criminal trial for pornography over drawings of vaginas she posted online.

Her case has prompted international condemnation and protests in Russia. If convicted, she would face up to six years in jail.

She spent months under house arrest over the pornography charge before being released in March.

The date of the trial has not been announced, Tsvetkova said. She expects investigators to send case documents to prosecutors next week.

"I'm in an okay mood, in the mood for a fight. What else can I do?" she told AFP.

She was fined Friday on the basis of a hugely controversial law banning propaganda of "non-traditional" sexual relationships to minors — a euphemism for gay relationships.

"I've never seen anyone harmed by a drawing of smiling people," Tsvetkova said in court.

"You can't force anyone to change orientation through words or showing drawings of single-sex couples."

She said she would appeal.

The law signed by President Vladimir Putin in 2013 has been used by officials as grounds to ban numerous gay pride events but there have been relatively few prosecutions.

Tsvetkova has already been found guilty once under the law. She was fined 50,000 rubles in December for similar online posts.

This month she learned police had opened a third "propaganda" case against her over drawings she posted to protest against a new constitutional amendment outlawing gay marriage.

Russia this month added a phrase to its constitution saying that marriage is only between a man and a woman after a national vote, codifying the country's homophobic climate.

Putin this month mocked the US Embassy in Moscow for flying a rainbow flag to mark Pride month in June, saying that it showed "a certain something about the people who work there."

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