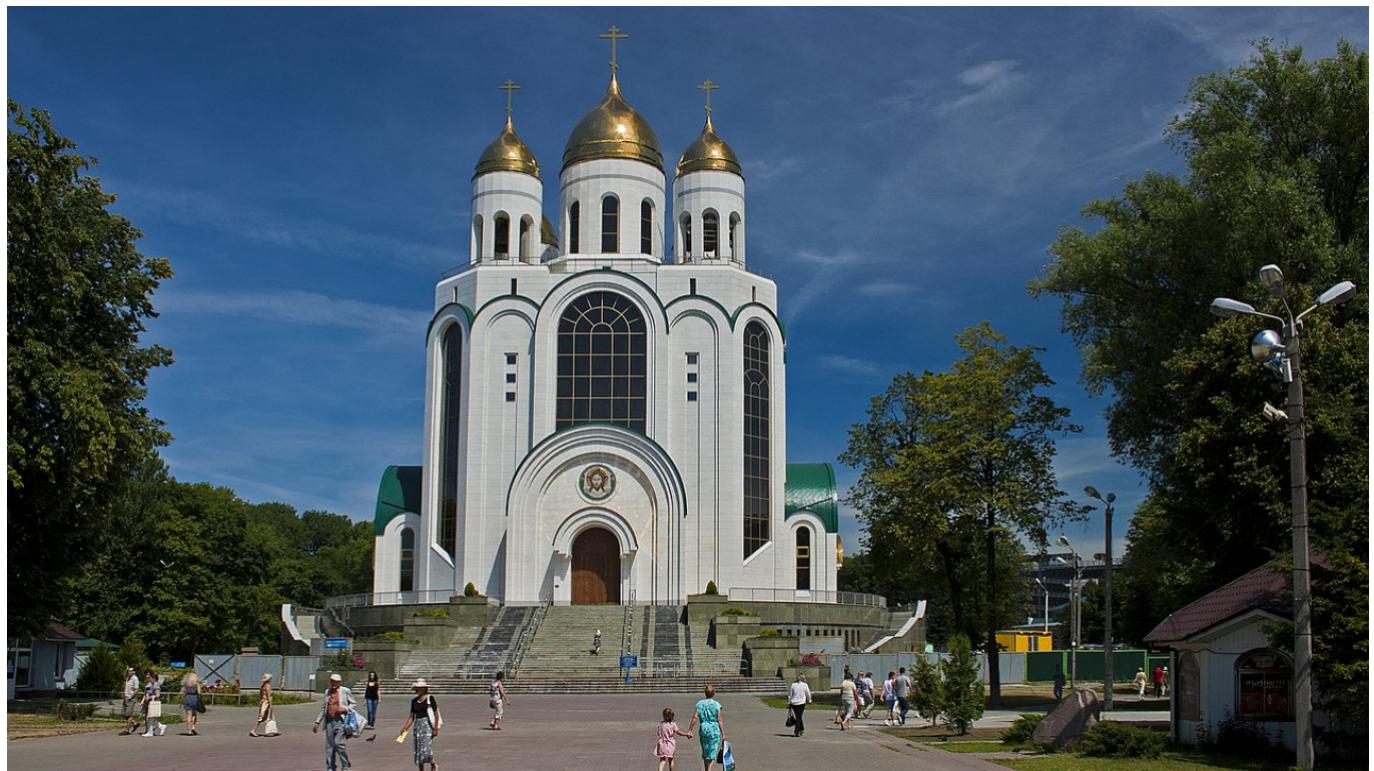


Russian Troops Detained for Washing Shoes in Holy Water

September 18, 2020



The Cathedral of Christ the Savior in Kaliningrad. [Viktor Zander / Wikicommons](#)

A pair of Russian soldiers have been detained on charges of offending religious believers after they washed their shoes in holy water, [Interfax reported](#) Thursday.

In a video that went viral this weekend, two young men can be seen laughing as they wash their shoes at a chapel next to the Cathedral of Christ the Savior in Russia's westernmost exclave of Kaliningrad.

Embed:

“This is holy water for them while we wash our feet, for real,” one of the several men who appear in the video can be heard saying.

Military investigators opened a criminal case into insulting religious beliefs against a Russian Navy contract soldier and a conscript following the incident, [Interfax cited an unnamed](#)

source as saying.

The two Baltic Fleet soldiers hailing from Russia's ethnically diverse Muslim-majority republic of Dagestan were reportedly detained Monday.

The soldiers could spend up to a year in jail on the charges.

Prosecutors have launched an inquiry into extremism, according to Interfax.

Related article: [Russian Teen ‘Insults Religious Feelings’ With Church Candle TikTok](#)

The Kaliningrad diocese of the Russian Orthodox Church [called](#) the foot-washing video “unpleasant” and welcomed a filmed apology posted by one of the culprits.

“We hope that other participants in the incident will follow his example and repent publicly,” it said in a statement.

The diocese added that it temporarily turned off the chapel’s water for planned renovations.

Russia criminalized insulting the feelings of religious believers in 2013 after anti-Kremlin group Pussy Riot performed a “punk prayer” at a central Moscow cathedral, calling on the Virgin Mary to banish President Vladimir Putin.

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