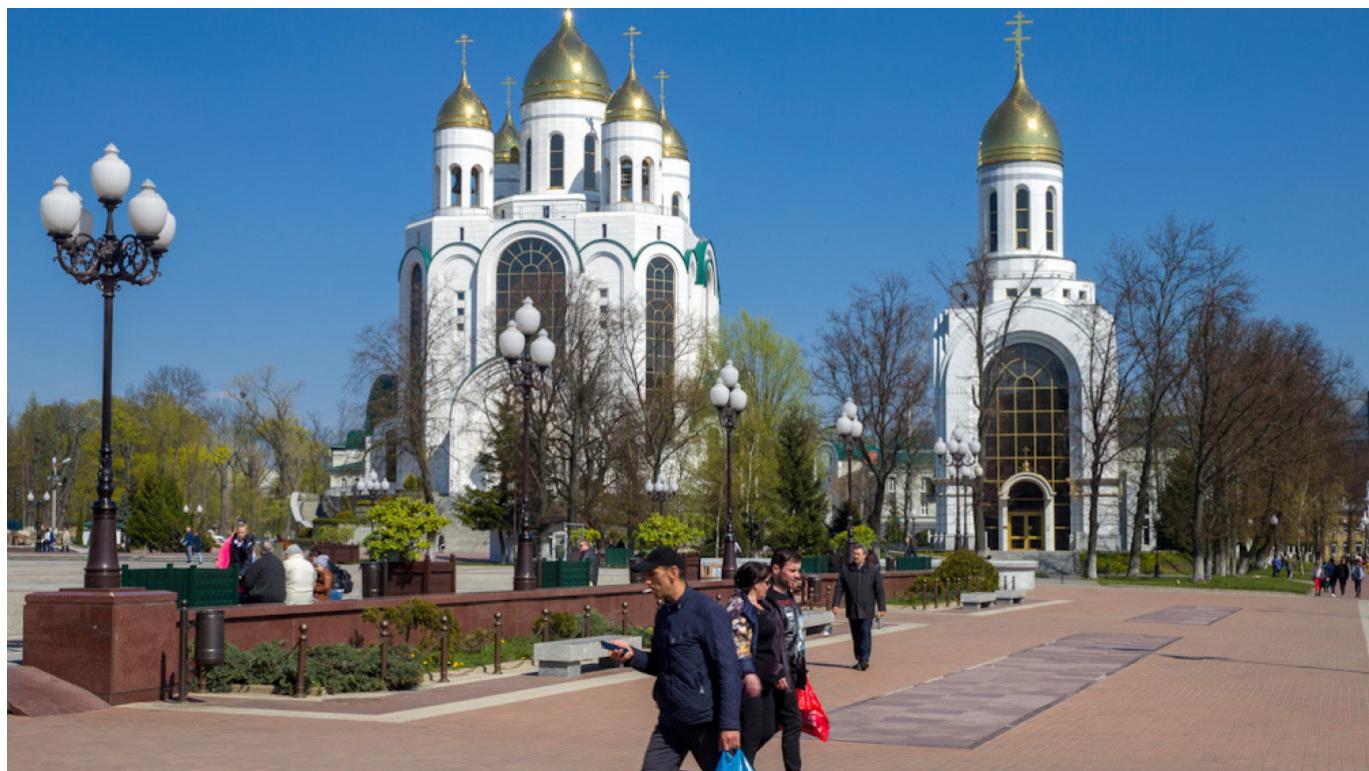


Russian Troops Fined for Contentious Holy Water Shoe-Washing Video

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The Cathedral of Christ the Savior in Kaliningrad. **Vladimir Ryabchikov / TASS**

Two Russian soldiers have been fined for washing their shoes in holy water, the *Kommersant* business daily [reported](#) Monday.

Video of the two Navy servicemen boasting of washing their feet in “their [worshippers’] holy water” at a Russian Orthodox chapel in Russia’s western exclave of Kaliningrad sparked backlash last fall. The men, who are natives of the Muslim-majority republic of Dagestan in southern Russia, later filmed a public apology.

The Kaliningrad garrison military court found the pair guilty of insulting religious beliefs and fined them 100,000 and 200,000 rubles (\$1,300 and \$2,500) each, *Kommersant* reported.

The soldiers escaped a potential one-year prison sentence due to mitigating circumstances that included their donations to the church, to local charities and to an orphanage.

Related article: [Russian Troops Detained for Washing Shoes in Holy Water](#)

Contract soldier Rasul Saikhanov received the smaller fine because he had pleaded guilty, *Kommersant* reported. Conscript Jamaldin Magomedov pleaded not guilty and maintained that his actions did not offend religious feelings.

Both sentences have reportedly entered into force. *Kommersant* did not say whether the convicted soldiers plan to appeal their sentence.

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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