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Russia Outlaws Anti-Women 'Male State' Group as 'Extremist'

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Male State founder Vladislav Pozdnyakov **doktorvladi / Instagram**

Russia has banned the "Male State," an ultra-nationalist hate group that has carried out abuse campaigns against women and minorities, as "extremist," the Mediazona news website reported Monday.

The Nizhny Novgorod regional court ruled that founder Vladislav Pozdnyakov's "Male State" is an extremist group, upholding a Prosecutor's Office request, according to Mediazona's live blog from the court.

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Male State touts "a radical patriarchy with the goal of changing the constitutional order," the outlet cited the Russian police anti-extremism unit's description of the group as saying.

The group "opposes the current political regime and believes that the Russian authorities are

organizing a genocide of the male population," it added.

The "extremist" designation means that the Male State group is banned in Russia, with members facing jail time if convicted of organizing its activities.

Pozdnyakov himself is not in Russia and had reportedly promised to testify in court via video link.

This year, the Male State group led coordinated social media campaigns against the Russian wife of a Nigerian student who drowned while rescuing a swimmer and a sushi company that ran an ad featuring a black model. It has previously been linked to groups that shamed women for fraternizing with foreign football fans during the 2018 World Cup in Russia.

Pozdnyakov was handed a suspended sentence in 2018 on charges of inciting hatred toward women, a sentence that was overturned the following year.

After being banned from the VKontakte social media site in 2020, Male State primarily coordinated its activities on the Telegram messaging app. Telegram, founded by Russian-born tech entrepreneur Pavel Durov, banned Male State's channel last week after coming under fire for allowing the group to operate there.

"Male State" joins dozens of various fundamentalist, as well as religious and political, groups that Russian courts have outlawed in recent years.

They include the Islamic State and the Taliban as well as the Jehovah's Witnesses and jailed Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny's investigative outfit Anti-Corruption Foundation (FBK) and political and activist network.

The Taliban and the Islamic State are terrorist groups banned in Russia.

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