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Moscow Metro Passengers Detained for Harassing Muslim Woman, Lawyer Says

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Yelizaveta Baranovskaya (left) and her harasser, who was caught on video (right). **t.me/kosa_media**

Authorities in Moscow have detained two men accused of harassing a female metro passenger for wearing traditional Islamic clothing, Russian media reported Tuesday.

Video of the conflict surfaced last week, showing one young man demanding that the woman take off her niqab — a full veil with a small slit for the eyes — and "wear normal clothes."

A second elderly man is seen siding with him after the conflict breaks out, while other passengers speak in support of the woman.

The unidentified young man is heard invoking Russia's ongoing military campaign in Ukraine as the reason for his demand.

"Are you all tolerant? What about our Russian boys being killed [in Ukraine] while they're sitting here?" he tells the other passengers pointing toward the Muslim woman.

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Lawyer Aza Aliyeva said she and her client who was harassed, a Russian national named Yelizaveta Baranovskaya, have pressed charges against the unnamed young man for violating her right to freedom of religion and inciting hatred.

Moscow's Investigative Committee is carrying out a preliminary investigation into the incident and has not yet opened a criminal case, according to the Telegram news channel Ostorozhno Novosti.

Baranovskaya addressed the metro conflict in a video message published Monday, thanking fellow passengers for standing up for her right to practice her religion.

Russian authorities have not commented on the incident.

Islam is Russia's second-largest religion after Orthodox Christianity.

Various estimates place the current Muslim population in Russia at between 14 million and 20 million people, or 10-14% of Russia's total population of around 147 million.

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