The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Russian Students Confront Pro-Kremlin Censorship Activist Mizulina

February 09, 2024



Yekaterina Mizulina meeting with students from Kazan Federal University. **t.me/horizontal_russia**

Yekaterina Mizulina, the leader of Russia's crackdown on anti-war artists and content creators, has been confronted by university students in the republic of Tatarstan, media outlets reported Friday, in a rare example of public backlash to her work.

Videos of heated debates between Mizulina, who heads the Kremlin-aligned Safe Internet League, and Kazan Federal University (KFU) students were posted by local student magazine Groza on the Telegram messaging app.

"It's bad when millions of Russians leave the country never to return," said the student, identified by Groza as Arkady Zaytsev.

"Many IT professionals, citizens of our country have left exactly because the [Soviet] practice of denunciations has resurfaced," the student continued, with Mizulina chiming in to defend the wartime crackdown on dissent.

Embed:

KFU's Telegram channel posted a brief excerpt of her exchange that omitted the heated parts of the conversation.

"Yekaterina Mikhailovna [Mizulina] invited young people from the audience to a debate," KFU wrote.

Mizulina's Telegram account posted a single video of students chanting "Russia" toward the end of her visit.

The independent news channel RusNews posted another video, saying the "Russia" chants were interrupted by chants of "Tatarstan."

Less than an hour later, the outlet posted a video showing students leaving their seats and heading to the exits during the Q&A session with Mizulina.

On Thursday, Groza posted a screenshot of a WhatsApp message saying that certain groups of students had been "ordered" to attend Mizulina's talks.

Related article: EU Sanctions Russia's Chief Denunciator Mizulina Over Free Speech Abuses

Earlier this week, a different student in another region confronted Mizulina over state policies. The censorship activist forced him to apologize to avoid facing prosecution for "discrediting" the Russian army.

Responding to the media coverage, Mizulina wrote that "debates between students, open mics, vibrant questions and discussions [are] a tradition at all my meetings with students that's been in use for more than half a year."

Mizulina, 39, the daughter of ultraconservative ex-lawmaker Yelena Mizulina, has denounced at least 166 people and four musical groups throughout her career. Subjects of her accusations have retracted their work, had their concerts canceled and even faced criminal charges.

Others have visited her office to apologize for their conduct, highlighting the level of power she has built despite not running a state organization.

Mizulina and the Safe Internet League were last month sanctioned by the European Union for reinforcing government censorship by initiating complaints about anti-war artists and influencers to Russian law enforcement agencies.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2024/02/09/russian-students-confront-pro-kremlin-censorship-activist-mizulina-a84042