

Football Fans Clash After Dagestan Club Plays in Moscow

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Anzhi fans gesturing during Thursday's match with AZ Alkmaar at Lokomotiv's stadium in Moscow.

Police detained around 40 people for brawling in the Moscow metro late Thursday following a match involving Dagestan-based football club Anzhi, in the second straight day of ethnically charged violence between fans.

The fights broke out after a UEFA Europa League match in Moscow between Anzhi and Dutch team AZ Alkmaar. Eighty fans were arrested at the contest for offenses including shouting nationalistic and vulgar slogans and throwing flares onto the field at the stadium of the Lokomotiv football club, a police spokesman told Interfax.

In the metro following the match, police broke up several fights and held "preventive discussions" with 40 people after arresting them, police said in a statement on their website.

Coming on the heels of a brawl between supporters of the Zenit club and Anzhi fans outside a McDonald's restaurant in St. Petersburg on Wednesday, the head of the State Duma committee on ethnic issues called for better efforts to prevent violence between fans, some

of whom are also members of nationalist groups.

"Everyone needs to work, and first and foremost law enforcement agencies, the clubs themselves and fan organizations. They need to follow the law," Gadzhimet Safaraliyev of United Russia told Interfax.

"Why are some people jailed for a carelessly said word when there are also insults and incitements of ethnic hatred, throwing of various objects — and no one responds?" Safaraliyev said.

Ethnic tensions have played a role in clashes involving football fans in the past, including in a 2010 riot near the Kremlin in which 5,000 nationalists fought with police following the release of a Caucasus native accused of killing a Spartak fan during a brawl.

Last week, a Lokomotiv fan club complained in a letter to team president Olga Smorodskaya about the planned match between Anzhi and AZ Alkmaar set to be held in the club's stadium in Cherkizovo, calling the decision to let "aliens" play in the stadium "shameful."

Anzhi is forced to play home contests in Moscow since UEFA has prohibited matches from being held in Makhachkala, the capital of the volatile Dagestan republic, due to safety concerns.

A Zenit fan club wrote in a message on their website Friday that they want a similar ban for Russian league matches, following fights between Zenit and Anzhi fans in Makhachkala after a match between the sides last week.

Anzhi on Friday asked police to investigate Wednesday's brawl between fans in St. Petersburg, according to a message on the club's website. Police said Thursday that a criminal case had been opened in connection with the incident.

In a separate message, Anzhi expressed gratitude to Moscow police and Lokomotiv security personnel for maintaining order during Thursday's match in Moscow.

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