

Investigators Summon Gay Rights Activist for Questioning

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Russia's Investigative Committee has summoned LGBT activist Nikolai Alexeyev for questioning over Twitter remarks said to be insulting to State Duma deputies.

Investigators have also called in for questioning "unidentified persons," who, like Alexeyev, are suspected of publishing "false information" about State Duma Deputy Yelena Mizulina and her first deputy Olga Batalina on the Internet, BBC Russia reported.

Alexeyev said he is currently on holiday abroad and will go to the Investigative Committee when he returns on Aug. 12, Gazeta.ru reported.

A criminal case on charges of slander and insulting a government official was opened after Mizulina complained that Alexeyev had insulted her and Batalina, a senior member of United Russia. If found guilty of slander by using mass media, he could face a 1 million ruble fine (\$30,000) or 200 hours of community service. The sentence for insulting a government

official in connection with their duties could be one year of correctional labor.

Mizulina told the Prosecutor General's Office that Alexeyev had posted rude and offensive remarks about the two deputies in connection to the recently passed law prohibiting gay propaganda. Batalina said that while she personally did not feel offended, she wanted to protect other lawmakers from such an incident in the future.

"Every person is free to agree or disagree with this or that law. But expressing an opinion should not prevent other people from doing their professional duties. That's why we decided to file this request, in order to protect the interests of all lawmakers," Batalina said.

Alexeyev said he did not see anything criminal in stating his personal opinion.

"They offend millions of people with their initiatives and laws, such as the gay propaganda law. I'm just expressing my public stance," he told Izvestia.

"I'm confused what it was that I said on Twitter that insulted Mizulina and Batalina. Investigators can reread 10,000 tweets if they want, I do not," Alexeyev added.

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