

Ukraine Bans Bloodhound Gang Bassist for 5 Years for Flag Desecration

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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KIEV — A U.S. musician who apparently desecrated the Ukrainian flag has been banned from entering the country for five years, the Ukrainian Security Service reported.

The ban followed an incident on July 30 in the Ukrainian capital Kiev, when U.S. rock group Bloodhound Gang's bassist Jared Hasselhoff allegedly urinated on a Ukrainian flag, a YouTube video shows.

The next day, the bass player also apparently desecrated a Russian flag. Ukrainian authorities have opened criminal cases over both incidents and are investigating them.

During a performance by the band in the Ukrainian port of Odessa on July 31, Hasselhoff crammed a Russian flag down his pants and literally wiped his butt with it, a YouTube video shows.

Russian authorities subsequently canceled the band's scheduled appearance at the Kubana rock festival, near the southern Black Sea resort of Anapa. The band, who had arrived in Russia by then, reportedly left the country soon afterward. The Interior Ministry said Monday it had opened a criminal case over the Russian flag desecration.

Russia's Criminal Code states that "foreign nationals ... who commit a crime beyond the boundaries of the Russian Federation are subject to criminal liability in line with this code if their crime is aimed against the interests of the Russian Federation or a Russian national."

Desecration of the Russian flag is punishable by up to a year in prison, according to Article 329 of the Russian Criminal Code, in line with which the case was launched.

U.S. Ambassador Michael McFaul called the incident with the Russian flag "disgusting" in a Twitter message but said the U.S. Constitution's First Amendment protects flag desecrators from punishment in the United States. Flag desecration is, however, illegal in many other countries.

McFaul also condemned an act of violence against the band, apparently referring to a subsequent incident in Anapa Airport when band members were assaulted by local activists.

The YouTube video of the alleged flag desecration was flooded with angry Russian-language comments. Journalists later quoted the band as saying that all items that the band throws into the crowd must first pass through the bassist's pants.

Russian and Ukrainian lawmakers have proposed permanently banning Bloodhound Gang members from entering their countries.

Ukraine's Foreign Ministry denounced both flag incidents as "unacceptable."

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