

Russian Activist Stabbed for Displaying Anti-Putin Sticker on Car Window

By [Anna Dolgov](#)

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Viktor Chirikov decorated his car with a sticker reading "Putin, go away!"

An opposition activist in southern Russia who decorated his car with a sticker reading "Putin, go away!" has been stabbed by an attacker who objected to the anti-presidential slogan, a human rights advocate said.

Viktor Chirikov, an activist from the Solidarnost (Solidarity) democratic opposition movement, "received a knife wound for the words on his car," according to a Twitter message posted Friday by Pavel Chikov, a member of the Kremlin's human rights council. Chikov, who also heads the Agora association of human rights, attached a photo of a Russian-made sedan with the decal on its back windshield.

Краснодар.Активист Виктор Чириков получил ножевое за надпись на авто.
Ранее на него нападали охранники «дачи Ткачева»

pic.twitter.com/jTTSF9CgAd

— Pavel Chikov (@pchikov) [17 октября 2014](#)

According to the opposition-minded Novaya Gazeta newspaper, Chirikov suffered a slash wound to his palm during the incident, which took place last week outside the southern city of Krasnodar.

The activist told Novaya Gazeta that he had pulled over for a routine stop when another car pulled up behind him, and its occupants said they had taken issue with the slogan against President Vladimir Putin.

"Two men approached, one from the driver's side, the other from the opposite side," Chirikov was quoted as saying. "First, they expressed their grievances in 'mat' [crude expletives], [saying] that I shouldn't have written 'Putin, go away' on the back window. I told them I had the right to do so."

One of the attackers then tried to stab Chirikov through the rolled down car window, Novaya Gazeta reported. The activist, a former wrestler, leaped out of his car and flung the man to the ground, forcing the attackers to retreat.

Chirikov said that he did not file a police report over the incident because he did not note the car's license plate number and that he also considered requests for an investigation to be pointless after police had failed to investigate several other attacks against him, Novaya Gazeta reported.

Russians' soaring support for Putin — whose approval ratings reached an all-time high of 87 percent this summer amid backing for Crimea's annexation from Ukraine — has led some of the president's fans to lash out violently at those in Russia whom they consider insufficiently patriotic.

Last month, a man threw a stone at a woman who failed to rise for the Russian anthem after a DJ told patrons at a bar in the Black Sea resort of Anapa to stand for the hymn and throw pebbles at those who didn't, Ekho Moskvyy reported.

Chirikov was also hit in the head with a stone last year when campaigning for a local nature reservation, Novaya Gazeta reported. Activists say the preserve is being threatened by poaching and what they describe as illegal road construction to lay a short route to Black Sea beaches across the natural preserve.

Two years earlier, Chirikov was also allegedly beaten by security guards at the regional governor's country house, but the investigation was dropped, Novaya Gazeta reported.

The Solidarnost movement of which Chirikov is a member is named after Poland's renowned Solidarity group and was founded nearly six years ago by a group of prominent supporters of liberal democracy, including chess champion Garry Kasparov.

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