

Russian Bloggers Gauging Attitudes Toward Gays Find Violence

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Two Russian bloggers say they faced threats and violence when they walked through Moscow streets holding hands to gauge attitudes toward gays.

The men, who are straight and run a popular video blog, say they decided to use a hidden camera to record reactions in an "experiment" after a U.S. Supreme Court ruling recognizing same-sex marriage.

"We decided to check why people can walk holding hands over there without any problem, and what if we conduct such an experiment in Russia," said Yevgeny Babenko.

The two men walked hand-in-hand around Moscow for about an hour, encountering verbal insults and outright violence.

On Red Square, the video showed two men shouting an anti-gay slur at them. Elsewhere in central Moscow, one man tried to push them off the pavement.

The two men said they were shocked to discover the outright hostility on the streets of the

Russian capital.

"This walk lasted just one hour," Artyom Frantsuzov said. "If a young couple walks like this every day, there will be consequences."

Gays face widespread discrimination in Russia, which passed a law in 2013 imposing fines for spreading "propaganda of nontraditional sexual relations" to minors. The Russian government says the law aims to protect children but does not infringe of the rights of gays.

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