

21% of Theses Defended by Russian University Rectors' Contain Plagiarism

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Dissnet has exposed plagiarism in the theses of an array of Russia's top government officials and political figures.

One in five graduate theses defended by rectors of Russia's universities contain extensive plagiarism, according to a report by the Dissnet prominent online group devoted to exposing intellectual fraud by public figures.

The online group has analyzed the theses defended by 311 current university rectors during their graduate study over the past 15 years, and have found that 66 of the dissertations — or 21 percent — contain massive borrowings, Dissnet co-founder Andrei Rostovtsev said, Grani.ru news portal reported Sunday.

Despite Dissnet's submission of the results of its research to Education Minister Dmitry Livanov and to the Higher Attestation Commission, the rectors accused of plagiarism continue to “thrive,” Rostovtsev was quoted as saying.

The attestation commission has stripped State Duma lawmaker Rishat Abubakirov of his

doctoral degree in economics, after reviewing Dissernet's report exposing his thesis as plagiarism, another of the group's co-founders, journalist Sergei Parkhomenko, said on his Facebook page Friday.

Parkhomenko praised the decision as having created a “precedent,” adding: “This is the first sitting lawmaker Dissernet has scored.”

Abubakirov's thesis, which he defended in Russia's republic of Tatarstan in 2009, was found to contain dozens of pages fully copied from five research papers by other authors, Grani.ru reported. Out of the 314 pages of Abubakirov's thesis, only 43 pages were comprised of original work, according to Dissernet.

Dissernet has exposed plagiarism in the theses of an array of Russia's top government officials and political figures, but plagiarism by academic leaders was believed to be less common.

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