

Russian Police Frame Man as Nazi to Boost Stats

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The  **Moscow Times**

A policeman in Russia's Rostov region attempted to frame a man as a ❑Nazi in order to boost local prosecution rates, a statement released by ❑the Moscow-based SOVA Research Center said Tuesday evening.

The incident took place in January of last year, when the officer ❑used a police database to find a Rostov resident previously convicted of❑ inciting hatred online. The two struck a deal by which the officer ❑would use the resident's VKontakte social network profile to post the ❑swastika, and then pay the resident's inevitable fine.

However, the officer was unaware that the Rostov resident recorded ❑their conversations. A local court found the officer guilty of abusing ❑his power and of forgery. His sentence was eventually commuted and he ❑was quickly pardoned.

The court heard that he had wanted to improve arrest statistics ❑related to Russia's anti-extremism laws, which carry fines and jail time❑ for spreading hate speech on the internet.

Ninety percent of all extremism-related convictions in 2015 involved internet activities, Alexander Verkhovsky, head of the SOVA Center, told the Moscow Times in March. More than half of those involved VKontakte.

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