

News From Russia: What You Missed on the Weekend

A round-up of this weekend's news

July 17, 2017



@yashar / Twitter

Chechen Leader Calls for Purge of Gays from his Region

Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov [called for ridding his region of gay people](#) “to purify the [nation’s] blood,” in an interview with HBO TV, due to be broadcast on Tuesday.

Kadyrov dismissed media reports that gay men are being persecuted in Chechnya, saying there are no gay men there. But, he added, if “there are any take them to Canada.” The comments sparked a wave of outrage online.

President Putin Signs Order Punishing Athletes Guilty of Doping

President Vladimir Putin signed an [order](#) to retract presidential stipends from athletes convicted of doping offenses.

In 2015 and 2016, Russian athletes were hit hard by an international doping investigation that saw several dozen athletes stripped of their Olympic medals. Almost the entire Russian track-and-field team was banned from the Rio 2016 Olympic Games and the entire national team was banned from the 2016 Paralympic Games.

Georgia and Russia in Airlines Spat

Russia has retaliated against Georgia by [limiting flights](#) of Georgia Airways from Tbilisi to Moscow. In May, Georgia limited flights by Ural Airlines to Tbilisi.

The conflict centers around Zhukovsky Airport in the Moscow region, which a number of countries, such as Georgia, consider part of the Moscow airport system. Russia, however, points out that Zhukovsky is in the Moscow region and hence, should not be considered bound by agreements that concern Moscow airports.

Report Marks 3-Year Anniversary of MH17 Tragedy

The open-source investigation unit Bellingcat early on Monday published a [report](#) about the downing of Malaysian Airlines Flight 17 over eastern Ukraine to mark the three-year anniversary of the tragedy.

MH17, which was en route from Amsterdam to Kuala Lumpur, was shot out of the sky on July 17, 2014, killing all 298 people aboard.

On Sunday, a group of 15 relatives of the victims [staged a silent protest](#) outside the Russian Embassy in The Hague calling on Russia to “stop playing games.”

FSB Officers Charged With Corruption

Two officers of the Federal Security Service were [arrested and charged](#) with taking bribes of as much as 1 million rubles (\$17,000). The bribe was intended to facilitate the awarding of a 113-million ruble (\$1.9 million) contract to a private security company to service GlavUpDK, the state-owned company that services foreign diplomatic and corporate offices in Moscow.

Freak Weather Is the New Normal

The presidential advisor on climate change, Alexander Bedritsky, [said](#) that the highly unusual weather in the Russian capital this summer will most likely repeat in the future. He explained that the warming of Antarctica is having a major impact on regional weather patterns throughout the world.

Russian Hackers Suspected of Attack on Ireland’s Power System

Russian hackers working for the military intelligence (GRU) have targeted Ireland’s national power grid, unsuccessfully trying to infiltrate the system, [The Times](#) has reported. On July 8, U.S. officials claimed that Russian hackers also tried to penetrate their country’s nuclear power and energy companies.

Putin Casts Doubt on Accounts on Ivan the Terrible

During a Q&A at one of Russia's largest iron ore processing plants, President Vladimir Putin [cast doubt](#) on historical accounts that Ivan the Terrible killed his own son.

Historians who hold this view claim that such a story was created by the Vatican's emissary to Moscow in order to discredit the Russian leader and further the spread of Catholicism in Russia.

Russia Hopes to Attract Foreign Brains

The Russian government [is preparing a new law](#) that would simplify citizenship procedures for foreign students with exceptional results, and give them the ability to stay and work in Russia after finishing their studies.

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