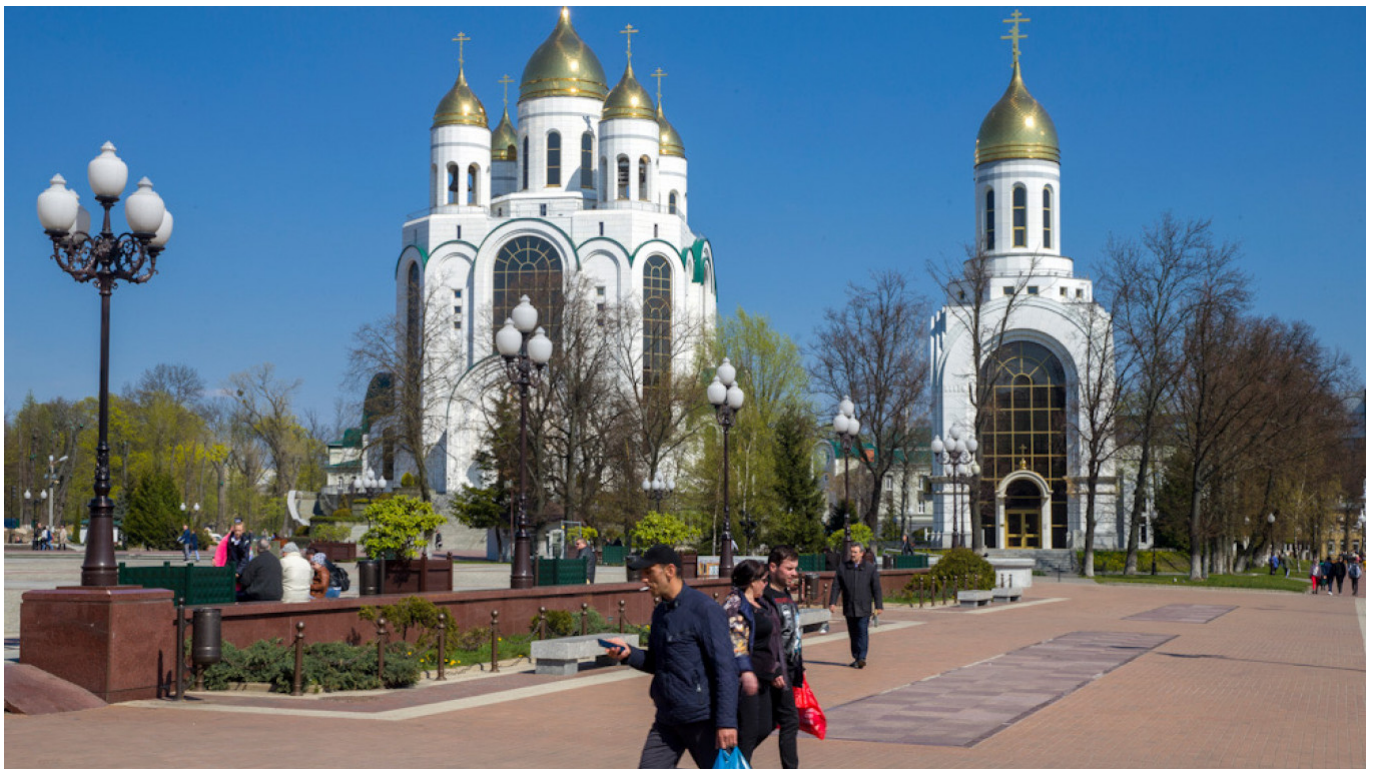


Russian Troops Fined for Contentious Holy Water Shoe-Washing Video

March 30, 2021



The Cathedral of Christ the Savior in Kaliningrad. **Vladimir Ryabchikov / TASS**

Two Russian soldiers have been fined for washing their shoes in holy water, the Kommersant business daily [reported](#) Monday.

Video of the two Navy servicemen boasting of washing their feet in “their [worshippers'] holy water” at a Russian Orthodox chapel in Russia’s western exclave of Kaliningrad sparked backlash last fall. The men, who are natives of the Muslim-majority republic of Dagestan in southern Russia, later filmed a public apology.

The Kaliningrad garrison military court found the pair guilty of insulting religious beliefs and fined them 100,000 and 200,000 rubles (\$1,300 and \$2,500) each, Kommersant reported.

The soldiers escaped a potential one-year prison sentence due to mitigating circumstances that included their donations to the church, to local charities and to an orphanage.

Related article: [Russian Troops Detained for Washing Shoes in Holy Water](#)

Contract soldier Rasul Saikhanov received the smaller fine because he had pleaded guilty, Kommersant reported. Conscript Jamaldin Magomedov pleaded not guilty and maintained that his actions did not offend religious feelings.

Both sentences have reportedly entered into force. Kommersant did not say whether the convicted soldiers plan to appeal their sentence.

Russia criminalized insulting the feelings of religious believers in 2013 after anti-Kremlin group Pussy Riot performed a “punk prayer” at a central Moscow cathedral, calling on the Virgin Mary to banish President Vladimir Putin.

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