

MPC Social Services

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MPC Task Force on Racial Violence and Harassment
Racially-Motivated Attacks and Harassment in Moscow
2Q & 3Q 2010 Statistics

I. Introduction

Since 2001 the Moscow Protestant Chaplaincy's Task Force on Racial Violence and Harassment has interviewed black Africans about racially motivated attacks and harassment they have experienced in Moscow. Using quarterly reports since the beginning of 2009, the Task Force is seeking to construct a reflection of incidents which minorities encounter while living in Moscow.

II. Executive Summary

During second and third quarters of 2010 (herein referred to as "2Q10 and 3Q10") the Task Force has recorded the following incidents against Black Africans in Moscow:

- **Five physical attacks that occurred in the second and third quarter of 2010** – all five appear to be racially motivated.
- **One report of harassment**
- **One previously unreported physical attack that occurred in 1Q10** – which appears to be racially motivated.
- **One report of a physical attack on a student and his subsequent expulsion from Moscow State University**
- **One report of murder of a black actor in St. Petersburg** – which appears to be racially motivated
- **One report of Russia's first elected black politician** – including a related radio interview (produced by NPR)

III. Summary of Recent Attacks

**Please note: the Task Force defines "attack" as a physical assault regardless of whether or not it causes serious lasting injury for the victim.*

Attack One

On the evening of **Thursday 1 April** a man from Cameroon was riding the Eliktrishka alone. Whilst he was sitting down, a Russian man walked up to him and slapped him in the face. The Cameroonian does not speak Russian well, so he asked the attacker in English, "Why did you slap me?" A retired Russian military man

witnessed the scene. He told the victim to be calm. At the stop, the military man took the attacker off the eliktrishka. He called the police and all three men went with the officer to the police station. They listened to the military man describe the events. He explained that the Cameroonian man was innocent of any wrongdoing. The police said that it was late at night and that the victim should come back the next day and they would compensate him for the pain medication that he needed. When the victim returned by himself the next morning, the police twisted his story and said that he provoked the attack and they refused to help him. The victim believes the attack was racial motivated as it was completely unprovoked.

Attack Two

In the early afternoon of **Friday 20 August 2010**, the victim, a Ghanaian man, was in the supermarket buying himself some basic foodstuffs. He saw some large, young Russian men standing near him. He continued his shopping but looked again and noticed one young man, around 25 years old, holding two bottles approaching him from the side. The victim moved away from where he was standing to the other side of the aisle. But he saw the young man with the bottles following him. The young man then threw the bottles at the Ghanaian man, hitting him in the head. The victim then ran towards the supermarket security guard, who had witnessed the attack. The security guard did not offer any assistance, he just told the victim to go out of the supermarket. The victim saw the attacker was still following him so he ran away from the store. The victim then sought assistance at MPC's medical clinic due to the pain in his head caused by the attack. The victim feels the attack was racially motivated as he had been minding his own business and had done nothing to provoke the violence.

Attack Three

In the afternoon of **Friday 27 August 2010**, the victim, a UNHCR registered refugee from Rwanda, but currently living in a refugee camp in Perm, Siberia, went to the refugee centre to make a copy of his passport. The female assistant at the centre in charge of the photocopying tried to take his passport away from him by force. Consequently, the victim decided not to give it to her and instead make the copy elsewhere. At this point the Director of the Refugee centre came into the office and hit the victim in the neck. The force of the blow caused the victim to fall to the floor and hit his head. After getting up from the floor the victim tried to leave, but the Director stood in front of the door and would not allow him to leave. The Director then tried to take the victim's passport from him, but the victim refused to allow him to do so. He eventually managed to exit the centre with his passport. As result of the Director's actions the victim suffered a head injury, black eye and leg injury.

Attack Four

A fourth racially motivated attack occurred around 2pm in late **August, 2010**. The victim, a Nigerian man, was walking alone in the Ohotny Ryad area of Moscow. Without any warning he suddenly felt two young men come from behind and start beating him. The victim had done nothing to provoke the attack. He believes the

attackers were around 18-20 years old, they did not smell of alcohol and their eyes were clear. The attackers continued beating the victim until the attack was eventually stopped by a police officer, who subsequently arrested the two attackers. The police officer then took the victim to hospital where he was treated for his injuries. The victim reported that the police took the attack seriously and called the attackers parents. When the parents arrived both the attackers and parents pleaded to be forgiven. They offered the victim 1,000 Rub for the hospital treatment and the victim gave them his forgiveness. No further police action was taken.

Attack Five

A fifth attack occurred on **Sunday 19 September** at approximately 3.30pm. The victim, a man from the Ivory Coast, was crossing the road near the park in Aviomontora. Before he began to cross he checked the road carefully until he thought it was safe. However, as he was crossing he saw a car approaching very quickly towards him. He tried to go faster and reach the sidewalk, but before he could do so the car hit him on the side of his leg. The force caused him to fall to the ground. The driver stopped the car, got out and began yelling at the victim, who had only arrived in Moscow on the 2nd September and does not speak Russian. He could not understand what the driver was saying but he knew by the tone of the driver's voice and his hand gestures that it was something derogatory. The victim could also see the driver was very drunk. The driver continued yelling and behaving aggressively towards the victim. Witnesses approached the victim and tried to help. The victim believes they suggested calling the police. However, the victim was frightened of the driver and just wanted to escape the immediate danger of the situation. Therefore, although his knee was in extreme pain, he got up from the ground and fled the scene. He now has difficulty walking due to the ongoing pain in his knee. He did not seek medical attention because he did not know where to go, he does not speak Russian and was worried about the payment. The incident has caused the victim to be very fearful of going out in Moscow, and he now plans to leave Russia.

IV. Summary of previously unreported physical attacks

The Taskforce was informed about an attack that took place in mid-March 2010. The victims, an African diplomat and his driver were driving home from work one evening. Both men are dark-skinned. They decided to stop to get dinner at Rustik's on Tverskaya near the Mayakovskaya Metro. They parked the car on Tverskaya and began to cross under the street using the perehod. However, when they entered the perehod, they came across a group of about 15 young Russian men. The gang immediately began to yell, "Afrikanski" and chase and hit the two victims. The victims ran to their car and were able to get away with only minor injuries. The victim reported the incident to police but to his knowledge, no investigation has been made.

V. Summary of Recent cases of Harassment

**Please note: racially motivated harassment takes many forms from inappropriate staring to verbal assault and intimidation. Victims rarely report the abuse, but when asked about it they often say they face it daily. When they do report incidents, it is usually because they have found the harassment particularly offensive or embarrassing.*

A Nigerian man recently reported to the Taskforce that he has now stopped visiting the Moscow Zoo, due to the particularly offensive harassment he experienced there. He reported that during his previous visits several people harassed him using racist slurs, pointing, yelling and derogatory name-calling. Of particular offence were suggestions that the victim looked like a “monkey” and that like other animals he “should be in a cage”. The victim said that whilst he experiences verbal harassment on a very regular basis, the level of harassment at the Moscow Zoo is especially bad.

VI. Related Events

A report from the [Youth Human Rights Movement](http://akuniwatchen.wordpress.com/):

In the evening of May 9th, Boris Desten, a Congolese student of the Moscow State University of Food Production, was attacked on the street by 8 young people when he was coming back from the official celebration of the victory in WWII to his dormitory. After the attack Boris called an ambulance and the medical certificate from Botkin hospital in Moscow states that he had received abrasions to the forehead and the back of the head. A policeman refused to register his complaint because “it’s Friday and a holiday and this is Russia.” On May 12 Boris discovered that he had been expelled from the university for the reason of “participation in the incident on 9 May 2010, which ended up with a fight on the dormitory territory”. He was evicted from the dormitory on the same date. Until 29 July the security guard of the dormitory did not allow the student to access his personal belongings. Boris Desten did not possess of any other clothes, except clothes in his dormitory room. Several days later he was robbed on the street and all his money, cell phone and even shoes were stolen. Boris Desten’s visa, which provided him to legally stay in Russia, expired on 24 August, 2010.

He hadn’t had any problems with the university administration up until that incident and was considered to be a good student with proper marks. Boris had to ask for asylum, financial and legal support to try to survive in Moscow and to get back his status of a student.

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On May 11th 2010, A black actor who appeared in popular Soviet films died in Saint Petersburg after being brutally beaten in a suspected racist attack, according to officials. The victim, Tito Romalio, 59, died on May 11 in Alexandrovskaya hospital after being beaten by a 43-year-old Russian in a street in the north of the city following a conflict. The suspect was arrested," a local police spokesman said. The

spokesman did not give further details, but Russian media outlets, citing anonymous police sources, reported that the attacker, identified as Khamzya Yenikejev, beat the actor out of racial hatred.

In June 2010 a Benin born man, Jean Gregoire Sagbo, became Russia's first black politician elected into office in the small Russian provincial town of Novozavidovo, in the Tver district about 100 kilometres from Moscow. Mr. Sagbo's election as one of Novozavidovo's 10 municipal councilors has been described by some as a milestone, given the extreme level of racism that prevails in Russia. But among the town's 10,000 people, the 48-year-old who has lived in Novozavidovo for 21 years is viewed simply as a Russian who cares for his hometown. He promises to revive the impoverished, garbage-strewn town, reduce rampant drug addiction, clean up a polluted lake and deliver heating to homes.

Link to radio interview – by David Greene, NPR

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=130102777>

If you would like to discuss the work of the MPC Taskforce on Racial Violence and Harassment, please contact mpcracialtaskforce@gmail.com