

# Moscow Protestant Chaplaincy

MPC Task Force on Racial Violence and Harassment  
Racially-Motivated Attacks and Harassment in Moscow  
4Q09 Statistics

## *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 people of color encounter while living in Moscow.

## *Executive Summary*

During 4Q09 the Task Force interviewed Black Africans who have suffered physical attacks and verbal abuse during recent months. :

- **4 physical attacks.** All four appear to be racially motivated.
- **1 physical attack from July 2009** – appears to be racially motivated.
- **1 harassment incident from June 2009** – appears to be financially motivated.

## *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.*



**On the evening of 6 October**, after work, the victim was waiting on the Barrekadnaya Metro platform for a friend. He was standing with his girlfriend, who is also African. A Russian man aged 30 – 35 walked by and kicked the girl's leg. The victim asked what was wrong, and the attacker slapped the girl in the face. Then the attacker knocked the male victim down and the male victim fell on his right hand. While he was down, the attacker stomped on the male victim's hand. The victim was unable to stand and the attacker started kicking him everywhere. While the attacker was kicking him he shouted, "You blacks, what are you doing here? We don't need you in our country." There were many witnesses because the metro was crowded at this time of day. The police arrived at the scene to gain control of the situation and, the attacker shouted, "If you hadn't come, I would have killed both of them. I don't want to see this kind of people here." The police escorted all three people to the police station. The police made an official report, and they told the victims that in this country, they should be glad that they weren't killed. They have no human rights here. They explained that the attacker would be kept in jail for one night and then released. Following this, the police took the male victim to the hospital where they X-rayed his arm. They said that it was broken, but the only treatment they provided was to wrap it in gauze. He also sustained injuries to his nose.



**At 19:00 on the evening of 27 October**, a Nigerian man was walking home from the metro. He was only 3 - 4 minutes walk from his home when two Russian men approached him from behind. They used a knife to cut him in several places – neck, chest, two cuts on left hand, and under his eye. The attackers then ran away. The victim was able to go to a friend’s house who called the police and took him to the hospital. He described his care at the hospital as very good. He was not required to pay for his medical care. The police came to the hospital and made an official report. They followed up with the victim later as well, showing him pictures of potential attackers, but since he was attacked from behind, he was unable to positively identify anyone. The police were also able to obtain a video from a security camera near the scene, but the video only showed the victim running away immediately after the attack. The victim feels that the attack was racially motivated because there was no other motive – they didn’t attempt to steal anything from him.

**At 2:00 am on 21 November**, a Nigerian man who works as a taxi driver was waiting for potential customers outside the Old Havanah Club. A second taxi driver who was a Russian man threw a beer bottle at the Nigerian man. The Nigerian man asked, “Why are you doing that? I have a right to work here also!” A second Russian man witnessed the incident, went inside the club and immediately reappeared with a third Russian man. The two men began to beat the Nigerian. They were shouting, “Go back to your own country!” Witnesses tried to stop the attackers and eventually escorted them away. He sustained injuries to his right knee and under his right eye. He did not report the incident to the police because he thought they would just overlook it. He believes the first incident (i.e. – the bottle throwing) was not racially motivated, but that the follow up beating by the Russian men was racially motivated because of the language they used.

**At 22:00 on 14 December**, two men from Cote D’Ivoire were sitting on a bench on the train platform. They saw a group of 5 Russian men leaving the station. The Russian men were drinking. When the group of Russians saw the two African men sitting on the bench, they immediately turned around and walked back into the station and approached the two victims. The group of Russian men were shouting many racial slurs including, “Nigger, What are you doing here? Go home!” One of the Russians hit one of the victims, and when the victim attempted to defend himself, all 5 Russians began hitting the 2 Africans. An older Russian man who witnessed the event intervened and sent the 5 Russian attackers away. Neither victim received severe injuries nor did they not seek medical care. He laughed at the idea of contacting the police, because, “There is no need, they won’t do anything.” The victim feels that the attack was racially motivated because it was unprovoked and because of the language used.

### *Summary of earlier attacks*

**Early in the morning of 17 July**, the victim was entering the Metro when he was hit with something in the head and he became unconscious momentarily. The group of three to four young Russian men also hit him in the chest and ribs several times and under his left eye. Two other Russian men witnessed the attack and ran to call 03. He was taken by an ambulance to the hospital. He received painkiller medication, stitches and an X-Ray determined that no bones were broken. The police met him at the hospital to make an official report of the incident. He felt they were concerned about him, but he wasn't able to describe the attackers, so no follow up was made. The victim can't think of any reason he was attacked. It was just a surprise attack and therefore he feels that it must have been racially motivated. Four months after the incident, he continues to have problems with his left eye and is not able to see properly.

### *Summary of earlier 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.*

**One night in June**, between 22:00 and midnight, the victim (who was homeless at the time) was approached by five Armenian young men and demanded that the victim give them his phone. They removed the SIM card and gave it back to the victim, but kept the phone. One of victim's friends pulled out a knife, and they returned the phone. However, the group of Armenians returned at 2am with three more companions (now totaling eight men). They threatened the victim with a gun and made him lie spread eagle on the ground while they stole his phone. They continued to harass him for about one hour and then left. The victim felt that the incident was at least partially motivated by racism.

### *2009 Year End Summary*

*The Task Force has analyzed the interviews from 2009 and created the summary below. If you would like more details you may contact us.*

**11 Severe Attacks:** *The Task Force defines a severe attack as one that requires hospitalization, large scars, or long term physical problems.*

#### **Examples include:**

- death from stab wounds in January 2009:
- threat, knife attack and attempted killing of two Nigerians in February 2009
- a serious attack against a 64 year old woman on a trolley bus in May 2009
- multiple knife stab wound and gunshot attack in June 2009
- multiple "broken-bottle" stab wounds in September 2009
- attack and shouted death threats on a crowded metro platform in October 2009

**15 Less Severe Attacks:** *The Task Force attempts to separate these from the most severe cases, however the physical and emotional trauma from a less severe attack should not be taken lightly.*

**7 incidents with helpful bystanders:** *In 7 incidents, the victims described a bystander as being helpful. Their assistance ranged from calling for ambulance or police, to actually stepping in to stop the attack.*

**2 incidents of “unhelpful” bystanders:** *These two incidents include the attack of the 64 year old woman on the trolley bus. There were several people on the bus who merely watched the incident or actually laughed. The other incident involved a man being harassed on a metro carriage and no one said anything while the unprovoked attackers threw beer on him and spat on him.*

**5 incidents where the victims described the police as helpful:** *In these incidents the police took formal reports, took steps to protect the victim, and/or followed up with the victim after the incident.*

**3 incidents of neutral police presence:** *In these incidents the police listened to the victim’s story, but did not take a formal report or make any attempt to seek out the attacker*

**3 incidents when the police were directly involved in harassing the victims.**

**1 incident when the police physically attacked a victim.**

#### *Goals for 2010*

- The Task Force plans to conduct interviews with bi-racial children (African/Russian). It has been reported that they suffer emotional and occasional physical abuse from fellow students and sometimes school staff. Our goal is to determine the true extent of the problem and share our results with people in a position to create tolerance training programs in schools. As always, our goal is to shed light on the problem and motivate positive change.
- We are making efforts to create educational campaigns in African countries so that people will be aware of the situation here before deciding to move to Moscow. Two informal polls among groups of 80 Africans revealed that they were completely unaware of the severity of the racial tension in Moscow before they moved.
- We will continue to conduct interviews with victims and are working towards expanding our interview program to insure that our summaries are more inclusive.
- We are working towards having our work translated into Russian so that we can more effectively inform Moscow citizens about the extent of the racial problems and involve them in creating change.

If you have any questions regarding the information in this report, or would like to learn more about the work that we do to document racially motivated attacks and harassment, please contact Lorissa Jackson, Coordinator, MPC Task Force on Racial Violence and Harassment at [mpctaskforce@gmail.com](mailto:mpctaskforce@gmail.com), or Laura Stagl at [laura.stagl@gmail.com](mailto:laura.stagl@gmail.com).

*“Let us not love with words or tongue, but with actions and truth.”*