

Belgian Held in Child Sex Investigation

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The  **Moscow Times**

A Belgian national and a Muscovite were detained in the capital over the weekend on suspicion of having sex with three boy prostitutes in public, news reports said Monday.

The Belgian, identified in Russian as Bruno Vas, 32, and Yaroslav Yermolayev, 41, were detained after police received a tip from a witness and placed in custody in western Moscow, the Investigative Committee said in a [statement](#).

The statement did not identify the witness, but Itar-Tass said it was a rowing coach who told police that he saw the two suspects having sex with the boys outdoors near the Krylatskoye rowing canal and prevented them from fleeing while he waited for the police to arrive.

The three boys, aged 11 to 13, had sold their bodies for sex before, Itar-Tass said. Investigators believe that they were also paid by the two suspects, news site Baltinfo.ru said, citing an unidentified law enforcement official.

An Investigative Committee spokeswoman [told](#) Itar-Tass that the Belgian, who works as a computer programmer, had previously been convicted for child abuse in Belgium. Baltinfo.ru [said](#) he arrived in Russia a week ago and stayed at the apartment of the other

suspect on Ulitsa Demyana Bednogo.

The Investigative Committee statement said the suspects are believed to have abused underage boys from July 31 to Aug. 6 and faced a maximum prison sentence of 20 years if convicted.

While law enforcement agencies have regularly reported detentions of suspected child molesters, Russian media attention was limited until last month when the Kremlin introduced in the State Duma a bill on voluntary chemical castration for convicted offenders. Some observers say the new attention is a Kremlin-orchestrated attempt to secure public support for the castration bill.

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