

Tatarstan Top Cop Resigns Over Sodomy Scandal

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The head of Tatarstan's police force resigned from his post Thursday after a shocking episode of police brutality in Kazan that jolted the nation.

Asgat Safarov had led the Tatarstan police since 1998, but his position grew untenable following the March 9 death of 52-year-old Sergei Nazarov, who was allegedly beaten and sodomized with a champagne bottle by police in the republic's capital.

Five officers were arrested, but the incident at the Dalny station set off protests locally and cast a dark pall over outgoing President Dmitry Medvedev's much-heralded police reform campaign.

Safarov said in his resignation letter that he didn't immediately step down because he wanted to see through efforts to punish those involved in the case.

"If I had done this earlier, immediately after the incident at the Dalny station, it would have been cowardice and betrayal toward the team: [it would] say, I'm leaving and you face

the consequences. Now, after all measures that depend on me have been taken — both bringing those responsible to justice and not allowing such cases to occur in the future — I have submitted my resignation," Safarov said, according to RIA-Novosti.

After Nazarov's death, at least 28 other citizens have complained of lawbreaking by Kazan police, including one 22-year-old man who claims that Dalny police sodomized him with a pencil and a bottle. Two officers were arrested in that incident.

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