

Rights Group Urges Investigation of Journalist Attack

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Elena Milashina

The attack on Novaya Gazeta journalist Yelena Milashina could be connected to her work as a journalist and should be investigated accordingly, Human Rights Watch said in a statement on its website.

"When a courageous journalist who works in a hostile environment is attacked, the authorities need to examine whether what may look like common mugging could be linked to her professional activity," Hugh Williamson, Europe and Central Asia director at Human Rights Watch said in the statement.

Milashina was attacked while walking home with a friend near her home in the Moscow suburb of Balashikha just after midnight early Thursday. Milashina's purse was taken during the attack, while her friend, Freedom House employee Ella Asoyan, lost a laptop. The two unknown assailants kicked and punched Milashina on the head and face, knocking out a tooth and leaving her with numerous bruises on her head and neck.

She believes the brutality of the attack alone indicates that the attack was linked to her work.

"I've recently been working on a nasty affair involving drug trafficking. Ella (and some police agree with her) said they beat only me especially brutally," Milashina said on Facebook.

Authorities said Thursday they would investigate the incident as a robbery.

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