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Udaltsov Denies Journalist Beating Story

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Left Front leader Sergei Udaltsov has filed a statement with police alleging defamation by a journalist who said the opposition leader beat her after learning she was sympathetic toward United Russia's youth wing.

Udaltsov announced on Twitter Sunday that he filed the statement with the Ulyanovsk police department. He was arrested Saturday afternoon after 20-year-old Anna Pozdnyakova told police he struck her during an interview.

Udaltsov denied the incident, saying he did not strike the journalist and that he considered the accusation a provocation. He was later released from custody. "The Prosecutor's Office did not find any evidence of criminal action by me in the materials given to them. They have already let me go," Udaltsov said, Rosbalt reported.

Pozdnyakova disagreed with Udaltsov's version of the event, saying on Twitter that a video she took "clearly shows a blow to the face of the person filming, that is, me." A video posted to YouTube shows Udaltsov pushing the camera away from him after being repeatedly asked "are you also on a hunger strike?" but it is not clear whether or not a blow was dealt to the operator.

A doctor's report said Pozdnyakova had a concussion and multiple bruises.

Udaltsov was in the Volga river city to participate in a protest against plans to allow NATO forces to create a transit point there.

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