

Urals Police Raid Office of Critical News Site

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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The  Moscow Times

Masked investigators raided the office of the Ura.ru news site in Yekaterinburg on Thursday in what its editor-in-chief, Aksana Panova, called retribution for its critical coverage of the authorities.

Police said, however, that they were investigating the embezzlement of more than 10 million rubles from Ura.ru's bank account.

"We are being searched. All Ura.ru journalists have been blockaded in the second floor of our office," Panova said on her Facebook [page](#). "We don't know what they are looking for."

An Ura.ru employee, Daria Vasil'tsev, confirmed the raid on Twitter, [writing](#), "Guys! We are being searched! People are locked up on the second floor. Not allowed to call and write. Please retweet!"

Panova linked the raid to critical Ura.ru articles about Sverdlovsk Governor Yevgeny Kuivashev, Deputy Prosecutor General Yuri Ponomaryov and General Mikhail Borodin.

But regional police spokesman Valery Gorely said the raid was connected to a criminal investigation into the suspected large-scale fraud of more than 10 million rubles at Ura.ru. "The case has nothing to do with the media staff's creative activities," he told [Kommersant](#). "The subject of the investigation is financial fraud."

He did not elaborate.

Panova wrote her Facebook message in Baku, where she arrived earlier in the day on a flight from Yekaterinburg. She vowed to fly back immediately, saying "wild men in masks" had arrived at her apartment and were frightening her 70-year-old mother and young son.

But she insisted that she would not be intimidated. "I am not afraid, and I will not be afraid of these scoundrels," she said.

Ura.ru is the most popular news site in the Sverdlovsk region.

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