

Downtown Shopping Mall Closed After 'Raid'

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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The Tverskoi Passazh shopping center in central Moscow was closed Thursday after a reported raid, allegedly linked to a dispute with the Office for Presidential Affairs.

Sergei Zabarin, a lawyer for the company Piramida 2000, which rents the premises for the shopping mall from publishing house Izvestia, told RIA-Novosti that a group of unknown men broke into the mall at around 10 p.m. on Wednesday, chased out the security guards and barricaded the doors.

Entrances to the below-ground mall from Pushkin Square and metro Tverskaya remained closed Thursday morning, with no explanation for the closing posted on the doors, the news agency reported.

Zabarin linked the raid on the mall to an arbitration case between Piramida 2000 and the Office for Presidential Affairs, which he said had filed a lawsuit requesting that Piramida's 20-

year rental contract, signed in 1996, be terminated.

The lawyer alleged that the Office for Presidential Affairs, which manages Kremlin-owned properties, including the Izvestia complex, was attempting to have the contract cancelled illegally because it had signed an investment deal to reconstruct the building and was pressuring tenants to leave.

He said the Moscow Arbitration Court on Oct. 4 ruled against the Office for Presidential Affairs in its case against Piramida.

Another hearing in the case is scheduled for Nov. 30, Lenta.ru reported, citing court documents.

The police told RIA-Novosti that they are not getting involved in the raid on the mall, explaining that they are not authorized to do so because the argument is over managed properties.

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