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Gunshots From Wedding Cortege Alarm Muscovites

By The Moscow Times

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Police detained a man accused of firing a gun from a wedding cortege of 20 cars in northern Moscow over the weekend, the second such incident in less than a month.

Police were called in to respond Sunday afternoon to a suspected shooting after concerned residents reported a series of gunshots coming from the wedding cortege.

"Police received a report concerning 20 cars moving along Sokolnichesky Val occupied by people of a Caucasus appearance, with gunshots into the air heard from a red Bentley GT," police said Monday in a statement carried by Interfax. "A rapid response group and criminal investigators were immediately sent to attend to the incident."

Police intercepted the convoy as it reached a restaurant for the wedding reception in the Sokolniki neighborhood. A 38-year-old man, a Moscow resident of Tatar nationality, was detained for firing two gunshots into the air from an IZh air pistol and later charged with

disorderly conduct, police said.

Police stressed that the wedding guests were not Caucasus natives.

The incident comes after police charged 15 Dagestani wedding guests with minor offenses following gunshots from their wedding cortege on Sept. 30.

The shots were heard when the guests were rushing along Leningradsky Prospekt to a wedding reception. After calling for reinforcements, police stopped the nine-car cortege on the corner of Tverskaya Ulitsa and Mokhovaya, in front of the Kremlin.

Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev subsequently criticized the Dagestani wedding guests.

"There are various cultural traditions, but nobody has abolished legal norms, so you're not allowed to shoot into the air — not in Moscow, not in Makhachkala, not in New York," Medvedev said Oct. 2 at a meeting in Dagestan.

Marriage processions are a common sight on Moscow streets on the weekends, with festively decorated cars often following a stretch limousine carrying the newlyweds.

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