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Opposition Riot 'Conspirator' Alleges Police Torture

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Left Front activist Leonid Razvozzhayev with “March of Millions” fliers in both hands.

An opposition activist shown on national TV plotting with a Georgian power broker to cause "mass riots in Moscow" has turned himself in to police and written a 10-page confession, investigators said Monday.

But Leonid Razvozzhayev, who fled the country last week to seek asylum in Ukraine, said he was abducted by police and tortured.

"They promised to kill me. I was abducted in Ukraine and tortured for two days," Razvozzhayev, a Left Front activist and adviser to State Duma Deputy Ilya Ponomaryov, cried out as he was taken into a police vehicle after a hearing Sunday in Moscow, a LifeNews video showed.

The Investigative Committee said Monday in a statement that it would check

into Razvozzhayev's allegations but added that "Razvozzhayev was in a clear state of mind when he wrote his admission of guilt."

"Before Razvozzhayev was put in the pretrial detention center, he was examined by a doctor, and no bodily injuries were found," the statement continues. "There were no complaints from Razvozzhayev regarding the state of his health, and he did not request medical assistance."

Razvozzhayev's lawyer, Violetta Volkova, told The Moscow Times on Monday that she was sure Razvozzhayev was tortured into confessing. She added that she had not been permitted to enter the Lefortovo detention center to see her client, who was given a two-month pretrial sentence Sunday.

"The Investigative Committee did not allow us to participate in this case," Volkova said, referring to Razvozzhayev's defense team. "Our client did not make a public statement refusing our defense."

She added, "I assume that serious pressure is being put on him."

Last week, a criminal case was opened against Razvozzhayev, Left Front leader Sergei Udaltsov and aide Konstantin Lebedev, who were depicted scheming with the former head of the Georgian parliament's defense committee, Givi Targamadze, in the recently aired NTV documentary "Anatomy of a Protest 2."

The three activists hoped to attract 20 million rubles ($650,000) in financing and gather about 35,000 supporters to cause mass unrest in the nation, investigators said at the time.

Udaltsov was taken in for questioning last week but released the same day. Lebedev was deemed a flight risk and remained in custody Monday.

Razvozzhayev, however, fled to Kiev and "was attacked by several plainclothes people just after he left the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society office," Kommersant quoted witnesses as saying. "They put him in a car that left in an unknown direction."

Ponomaryov, whom investigators said Monday had been officially notified that his adviser was in jail, said by phone that he believed that Razvozzhayev had been abducted by Russian officials.

"He was abducted last Friday and brought to Moscow only on Sunday. No one knows where he was for two days," he said, adding that a source in Ukraine told him that Razvozzhayev was brought to Moscow on a private aircraft.

Ponomaryov alleged that Russian and Ukrainian authorities committed legal violations regarding the extradition to Moscow. He suspected that there could have been an agreement between the two nations ahead of an official visit of Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovych to Russia.

"It's more likely that Yanukovych decided to do Russia a favor to get a cut in prices for gas that Russia supplies to Ukraine,"Ponomaryov said.

Targamadze, the former Georgian defense official, has said he doesn't know the Left Front members with whom he was accused of hatching a nefarious plot.

"Russian law enforcement agencies set a goal to arrest Udaltsov and began to compile absurd facts to fulfill that goal," Interfax quoted Targamadze as saying Monday.

"Razvozzhayev's confession is nonsense. As far as I know, he was detained in Kiev, where he was trying to address the UN human rights commissioner," Targamadze said. "After the detention, certain measures were applied to him, and he started to say what Russian prosecution agencies wanted him to say."

Investigative Committee spokesman Vladimir Markin told RIA-Novosti on Monday, "I don't know what [Razvozzhayev] declared, but the fact remains that he, with his own hand, wrote a 10-page admission of guilt in which he describes preparations for riots."

Razvozzhayev was put on a wanted list Thursday, and on Sunday he "turned himself in to the Investigative Committee to write the acknowledgement, in which he described how he, Udaltsov, Lebedev and others had been plotting mass riots on the territory of Russia," Markin said in a video posted on the committee's website.

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