

Duma Deputy to Take Razvozzhayev's Case to Europe

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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State Duma Deputy Ilya Ponomaryov intends to travel to Europe on Friday to urge the UN and the Council of Europe's human rights commissioner to grant asylum to his aide Leonid Razvozzhayev, who mysteriously disappeared after seeking assistance at the UN refugee agency's office in Kiev last week.

Ponomaryov will make the trip after consultations with the opposition's newly formed Coordination Council, to which Razvozzhayev, a Left Front activist, was elected to last weekend together with 44 other people.

"I will fly to Europe the day after tomorrow to meet with representatives of the UN and the Council of Europe about this issue," Ponomaryov said on his LiveJournal [blog](#) Tuesday night. "I have already agreed with Boris Nemtsov, a member of the Coordination Council, on a joint statement to the UN and the Council of Europe's human rights commissioner to grant political asylum to Razvozzhayev and to take under consideration Russia's and Ukraine's

infringement of international law and asylum seekers' rights."

Ponomaryov deplored "outright acts of terror against members of the opposition" such as the recent detention of Konstantin Lebedev, an aide to Left Front leader and Coordination Council member Sergei Udaltsov, and an order by the authorities for Udaltsov not to leave the country. He said Razvozzhayev's detainment "went beyond any imaginable boundaries."

Razvozzhayev vanished during a break from a meeting at the Kiev office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees on Friday and was arrested in Moscow on Sunday on suspicion of plotting to foment unrest across Russia. Investigators have also linked Lebedev and Udaltsov to the case.

Razvozzhayev said he was kidnapped and tortured for two days. Investigators say he has admitted his guilt, and he was charged Tuesday with plotting riots, which carries a punishment of up to 10 years in prison.

Ponomaryov said he believes Razvozzhayev's confession was extracted through psychological pressure and threats to harm his family. Razvozzhayev has a wife and two children.

Human rights activist Valery Borshchyov, who has met with Razvozzhayev, also cast doubt on the validity of the confession. "From what we understand after meeting with Razvozzhayev, there have been instances of torture," said Borshchyov, a member of the Moscow Helsinki Group.

"He was not harmed physically but was subjected to horrible psychological torture, and he was forced to plead guilty," he said, according to Interfax.

Razvozzhayev's new lawyer, Mark Feigin, said Wednesday that he was trying to contact investigators to gain access to his client. Investigators said Tuesday that they had barred his previous lawyer, Violetta Volkova, from working with him.

Feigin said he would arrange all necessary documents to formally withdraw his client's guilty plea, Interfax reported.

Both Feigin and Volkova worked as defense lawyers during the recent trial for the Pussy Riot musicians.

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