The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Ukraine Confirms Razvozzhayev Was Abducted

By Yekaterina Kravtsova

October 25, 2012



A Ukrainian Interior Ministry spokesman said Thursday that Russian opposition activist Leonid Razvozzhayev was abducted last week in Kiev, likely not by "criminal elements" but by "security forces of other countries."

"This is not a criminal issue. It's an issue regarding the interaction of security forces, about which I do not know," Vladimir Polishchuk told Interfax.

Razvozzhayev, a Left Front activist whom Russian authorities put on a federal wanted list last week in connection with a riot investigation, disappeared in Kiev on Friday and turned up in Moscow days later with a harrowing tale of abduction.

He alleged that he was tortured and pressured into confessing to plotting mass riots in Moscow with fellow opposition members and a Georgian power broker. He had been seeking asylum in Kiev.

Polishchuk said a woman who claimed she was Razvozzhayev's lawyer told Ukrainian authorities that "unlawful actions" were used against her client.

Polishchuk said a check would be conducted regarding that issue, but because Razvozzhayev "was abducted not by criminals or terrorists, it's unlikely that a case will be opened," Lenta.ru reported, citing the Ukrainian National News agency.

Russia's Investigative Committee said earlier this week that Razvozzhayev had turned himself in and made the confession of his own volition. The committee said medical personnel had examined him and found no indication of injuries.

A spokeswoman for European Commission Vice President Catherine Ashton said Thursday that Ukraine should open an investigation.

"The European Union has started to study facts concerning Razvozzhayev. Charges against Ukraine can be very serious," Maja Kocijancic told Interfax.

U.S. officials requested that the Russian government investigate Razvozzhayev's claims. "We have expressed concern and asked Russia to carry out a strict investigation," U.S. Embassy press attache Joseph Kruzich said Thursday.

Human rights activists have come out in support of Razvozzhayev.

The head of Amnesty International Russia said Thursday that his group would take up Razvozzhayev's case. "We will carefully study all the information we get," Sergei Nikitin said.

"For an asylum seeker to simply vanish while lodging his asylum claims and then reappear in the country he fled is profoundly shocking," Hugh Williamson, Human Rights Watch director for Europe and Central Asia, said Wednesday in a statement.

"There needs to be a serious investigation to determine whether any Ukrainian officials were involved and to hold accountable any who played a role," he said.

Related articles:

- Duma Deputy to Take Razvozzhayev's Case to Europe
- Razvozzhayev Tells Harrowing Tale
- Opposition Riot 'Conspirator' Alleges Police Torture

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2012/10/25/ukraine-confirms-razvozzhayev-was-abducted-a18877