

Investigators Refuse to Open Case Into Razvozhayev 'Torture'

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The Investigative Committee won't open a criminal case into claims by detained opposition activist Leonid Razvozhayev that he was kidnapped and tortured by security services. Instead, investigators launched an inquiry into the activist's allegedly illegal entry into Ukraine, from where he mysteriously vanished last month.

The decision was made after an "exhaustive investigation" did not find any confirmation of Razvozhayev's accusations, the committee said in a statement on its website Thursday.

Razvozhayev, an activist with the Left Front opposition movement, has said he was seized by masked men in Kiev last month, who drove him over the Russian border and handed him to another group of men who held him for more than two days in an unknown location near the Ukrainian border.

He claimed that his captors subjected him to death threats and kept him in handcuffs and

straps and forced him to write a confession saying he had plotted to foment political unrest. After this, he said, he was driven to Moscow and handed over to investigators.

The Investigative Committee has said Razvozzhayev turned himself in on Oct 21.

On Thursday, the committee said it could not produce any evidence of his story. "Apart from his declarations, he could not present any material or circumstantial confirmation of crimes committed against him," the statement said. It added that he had refused to take a lie detector test.

The Investigative Committee said that a border guard stamp in Razvozzhayev's passport shows that he "voluntarily" left Ukraine for Russia on Oct. 19. It added that Razvozzhayev had admitted that he entered Ukraine illegally three days earlier by using the passport of his brother, saying prosecutors had authorized an inquiry into Razvozzhayev's illegal entry into Ukraine.

The statement also said a medical examination conducted immediately after Razvozzhayev's arrest showed that he had not been subjected to any physical violence. His supporters say Razvozzhayev was subjected to psychological torture.

Investigators also said they had questioned a number of witnesses, whose testimonies "irrefutably prove the falsity" of the activist's statements about his abduction and torture. The statement did not say who those witnesses were.

Razvozzhayev told his story to human rights activists who visited him in Moscow's Lefortovo detention center on Oct. 23.

Razvozzhayev's lawyer, Dmitry Agranovsky, said Thursday that he would continue to press for an investigation. "The topic is not closed," he told Interfax. Agranovsky also denied that his client had refused to be questioned with a lie detector. "He merely said he would make a decision [about a lie detector] after consulting with his lawyers," Agranovsky was quoted as saying.

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