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Razvozzhayev to Return to Moscow

By The Moscow Times

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Opposition activist Leonid Razvozzhayev will be returned to Moscow for further questioning, his lawyer said Wednesday.

Left Front activist Razvozzhayev, who says he was tortured after being kidnapped by masked men in Kiev and spirited across the border into Russia, is being held in pretrial detention in Irkutsk on charges of plotting to incite riots during an opposition protest on Bolotnaya Ploshchad on May 6.

The head of the prison where he is being held has not yet received the documents for his transfer but promised to send Razvozzhayev back to Moscow as soon as he receives them, the prisoner's lawyer, Dmitry Agranovsky, told the BBC's Russian Service.

The decision to return Razvozzhayev to Moscow apparently came from Rustam Gabdullin, the head of the investigative team handling his case, who recently returned to Moscow from Irkutsk.

"I am surprised the decision wasn't made when he was here. What stopped them from presenting the documents directly?" Agranovsky said.

Agranovsky also confirmed rumors that his client had recently been attacked in prison but decided not to lodge a formal complaint "because he is afraid it will be used as another reason to keep him in Irkutsk."

Investigators initiated a criminal investigation in October against Razvozzhayev and fellow Left Front activists Sergei Udaltsov and Konstantin Lebedev for orchestrating violence at the May rally.

The arrests followed a documentary on NTV television that accused them of using money provided by the Georgian government to fund their plot.

Udaltsov was placed under house arrest Saturday, while both Lebedev and Razvozzhayev have been in custody since October.

A court ordered Lebedev to be moved from prison to house arrest.

Each of the three faces up to 10 years in prison if convicted. About 20 other activists face charges in connection with the May 6 violence.

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