

Man 'Beaten' by Cossack Patrolmen

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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A Krasnodar man has accused Cossack patrolmen of knocking him unconscious with a flashlight after he refused to present his ID during an early morning confrontation last week, the Kavkazsky Uzel news portal [reported](#) on Monday.

Vadim Pashayev, 35, was walking home at about 2 a.m. on Thursday morning when he was approached by two men wearing Cossack uniforms and a third dressed like a policeman.

Without introducing themselves, the men asked to see Pashayev's ID. When Pashayev refused, one of them struck him across the face with a flashlight.

The blow was strong enough to knock Pashayev unconscious, and the men left him alone and bleeding in the middle of the night, his mother said.

Pashayev was later taken to the hospital and diagnosed with a concussion, a broken cheekbone and nose, and fractures to his skull, and he now requires two operations.

Local police have questioned Pashayev about the incident but have not yet commented on it.

About 1,000 Cossacks — self-styled decedents of the fearsome horsemen that defended Russia's borders under the tsarist regime — have been patrolling the Krasnodar region since September at the initiative of local lawmakers and Governor Alexander Tkachyov, who has called on the volunteers to help police enforce order and crack down on illegal migrants.

The program, which has been replicated on a smaller scale in Moscow and elsewhere, has alarmed human rights activists, who liken the Cossacks to aspiring pro-government paramilitaries and have questioned the legal ground on which they operate.

In January, Tkachyov further ruffled feathers by saying the patrolmen would be armed with traumatic guns, which shoot either rubber bullets or gas-fired pellets. The weapons are typically classified as "non-lethal" but can cause severe injury at close range.

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