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Siberian Police Stop Witch Burning

By The Moscow Times

March 06, 2014



In an unexpected incident worthy of the Spanish inquisition, a couple in eastern Siberia decided their acquaintance was a witch and attempted to burn her alive, though police stopped the impromptu auto-da-fe.

The rescue came not a moment too soon, as the couple were at that moment forcing the alleged witch headfirst into a burning stove in an abandoned building, Zabaikalsky region police said Thursday.

The 46-year-old victim was hospitalized with severe burns to her face and hands, police said in a statement.

The culprit was a 41-year-old local woman who was aided by a male acquaintance, the report said, without releasing their names.

The duo, who both had criminal records, reportedly came to the conclusion that the other woman was a witch while discussing her during a drinking session.

They then headed to her house and kidnapped her in order to exorcize the devil from her through fire. However, a visitor to the victim's house found traces of a struggle and alerted the police.

An investigation has been launched into the incident. Meanwhile, the female accuser has been admitted to a psychiatric ward.

It remained unclear what had prompted the witchcraft allegations.

Original url: https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2014/03/06/siberian-police-stop-witch-burning-a32747