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Armed Bank Robber Releases Hostages in Belgorod

By The Moscow Times

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Police block the way near an office of Bank Zapadny in Belgorod on Monday.

Police have detained an armed robber who took hostages at a bank in the southwestern Russian city of Belgorod.

The police's press service said that robber Alexander Vdovin, 46, gave up his hunting rifle voluntarily and released the three hostages unharmed following talks with the city's police chief, Interfax reported Monday.

Vdovin entered Zapadny bank at about 10:45 a.m. and demanded that tellers hand over the 23 million rubles ($645,000) that he had invested at the bank, which had its license revoked earlier Monday.

Police evacuated a nearby school and kindergarten near the bank as a precaution while the hostage situation was ongoing.

A criminal case has been opened against Vdovin on charges of taking hostages, a spokeswoman for Belgorod's police department told LifeNews. He faces between five and 10 years in prison if found guilty.

The Russian Central Bank revoked Zapadny bank's license after uncovering abnormalities in its accounting.

It also found that the bank had failed to ensure its own financial stability by establishing appropriate reserve funds.

See also:

Central Bank Revokes Zapadny Bank License

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