

Russian Lawmaker Suspected of Killing Uzbek Road Worker While Drunk-Driving

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A Russian regional lawmaker faces up to seven years in prison after he allegedly ran over an Uzbek road worker, killing him, while purportedly drunk-driving in downtown Moscow around 3 a.m. Sunday.

Vladimir Toporkov, 39, a legislator from the Tambov region, about 500 kilometers south of Moscow, has been detained in connection with the case, state news outlet ITAR-Tass reported.

His membership in the ruling United Russia party will be suspended for the duration of the investigation, the Interfax news agency reported, citing a press release by the party.

Toporkov reportedly crashed his Toyota Land Cruiser into another vehicle and, in the process, mowed down a man who was doing roadwork. That man, an Uzbek national, succumbed to his injuries at the scene, Interfax reported.

Various media reports cited witnesses as saying that Toporkov reeked of alcohol when he

exited his vehicle, but that he declined to perform a breathalyzer test when medics and police arrived.

Newsru.com also cited witnesses as saying the lawmaker had been driving over the speed limit, and Interfax said two pistols were recovered from his vehicle.

Alexander Nikitin, the speaker of the Tambov regional legislature, said that neither membership in the United Russia party nor a seat in the legislature is a privilege.

"All are equal before the law," Nikitin said in comments carried by Interfax on Monday. He added, however, that only a court order could deprive Toporkov of his seat in the legislature.

Toporkov became a member of Tambov's regional legislature in 2011, Newsru.com reported.

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