

Russian Police Investigate Attack on BBC Journalists in Astrakhan

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Steve Rosenberg of the BBC.

Russian police have opened a criminal investigation after a team of BBC journalists was attacked in the southern city of Astrakhan.

At least "three aggressive men" took part in the attack, during which a cameraman was beaten and his camera smashed, the BBC reported Thursday, citing its Moscow correspondent Steve Rosenberg.

The attackers made make their escape in a getaway vehicle, the report said.

The journalists — who had traveled to Astrakhan to investigate reports of Russian servicemen being killed near the border with Ukraine — were questioned by police for four hours after the attack.

Upon returning from the police station, the journalists discovered that recording equipment left in their car had been tampered with.

A hard drive from their main computer as well as several memory cards had been wiped clean of any information, the BBC quoted Rosenberg as saying.

Pyotr Rusanov, a spokesman for the local police, confirmed a victim had filed a report at the station and that a criminal investigation had been opened on charges of robbery, state-run RIA Novosti reported Thursday.

The journalists are now back in Moscow and are safe, the BBC said.

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