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Russia's Liberal Ekho Moskvy Braces for Inspection After Running Interview With Putin-Critic Navalny

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Lesya Ryabtseva, assistant to Ekho's editor-in-chief Alexei Venediktov, wrote that she would not be surprised if the station were raided or emergency maintenance works declared because of the interview with Kremlin critic Navalny.

The Emergency Situations Ministry has announced an unscheduled inspection of the offices of Ekho Mosvky two days after a journalist at the opposition-friendly radio station said it had been threatened with "problems" for running an interview with opposition leader Alexei Navalny.

News website Slon.ru cited the station's deputy editor, Tatyana Felgenhauer, as saying she did not think that the check was connected with the interview.

"We don't know why an unscheduled inspection is necessary, whether they will check everyone in the building, or why the prosecutor is involved with this," Felgenhauer was cited as saying.

"We don't connect this check with the Navalny interview, and we aren't making any guesses [about the cause] at all," she told Slon.

A scanned copy of the ministry's warrant to inspect the premises, citing a request from prosecutors as the purpose, was posted on Ekho Moskvy's website Tuesday.

The document says the building is being checked for its "compliance with mandatory requirements or requirements set by municipal legal measures."

According to the document, the inspection will begin on Wednesday and end by Nov. 20 at the latest.

In a blog post on the radio station's website Sunday, Lesya Ryabtseva, assistant to editor-in-chief Alexei Venediktov, wrote that she would not be surprised if the station were raided or emergency maintenance works declared because of the interview with Kremlin critic Navalny.

Ryabtseva said Mikhail Lesin, head of Gazprom Media — Ekho Moskvy's main shareholder — had phoned the station before the interview's broadcast in an effort to prevent it from airing.

She said Lesin warned them that "there would be problems" if they went ahead with it, which they did on Oct. 15.

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