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# Kremlin's Rights Council Scolds Chechen Leadership After Attack on Activists

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The Kremlin's human rights council has called on Chechen authorities to help a group of activists rebuild their Grozny headquarters after they were burned to the ground in an act of arson last week.

"Members of the group [Committee Against Torture] Sergei Babinets and Dmitry Dmitriyev spent the night in a hotel cordoned off by police. When they arrived to the office the next morning to collect their things, police took them and confiscated their telephones, computers and all electronic devices. Only several hours later were they freed and allowed to leave Chechnya," the council said in a statement published on its website late Monday.

The attack on the offices of the Joint Mobile Group of Human Rights Activists and the Committee Against Torture came after the group's head Igor Kalyapin appealed to Russia's

prosecutor general over incendiary statements made by Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov in the wake of a Dec. 4 terrorist attack on Grozny.

Kadyrov had written via Instagram that all relatives of militants should be held responsible for the crimes of their loved ones, a claim that rights activists said resulted in people's homes being burned down by masked men.

After asking law enforcement authorities to review the legality of Kadyrov's statements, Kalyapin's offices met with a similar fate on Saturday as a group of masked men torched them.

The attack came after Kadyrov had again taken to Instagram, this time to write that he had "information" that someone named Kalyapin had ties to the reportedly deceased Chechen rebel leader Doku Umarov, and had financed militants.

In connection with the arson, the committee said it was "necessary to declare that protecting the law has nothing to do with justifying terrorism. Any measures aimed against such an absolute evil as terrorism should be carried out in strict accordance with the law. The state cannot use weapons from the arsenal of terrorists: that would mean their victory over Russia as a just state. On this issue, the state and the human rights activists cannot have diverging views," the statement said.

"The threat of terrorism is our shared pain. To fight it, we need the law and solidarity, and not tyranny and commotion. That is why we are urging the authorities of Chechnya to cooperate in restoring the work of the Committee Against Torture," the council said.

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