

Russian Police Raid Home of Navalny Associate Over Alleged Painting Theft

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Opposition leader Alexei Navalny

The director of a prominent anti-corruption group founded by opposition leader Alexei Navalny said Friday that his house had been raided by police investigating an alleged artwork theft.

Roman Rubanov, who heads the Anti-Corruption Foundation, [said Friday on Twitter](#) that law enforcement officers were searching his home in connection to a "criminal case over a painting." The home of Rubanov's parents was also raided by police, Navalny [wrote on his Twitter account](#).

Last June, law enforcement officers seized a painting by street artist Sergei Sotov during a raid of Navalny's apartment.

Investigators claimed the painting, which had been on display in the city of Vladimir, was stolen, but the artist Sotov said he did not approach the police and had no claims to make

against Navalny.

Navalny's Anti-Corruption Foundation was also searched last month for 7 1/2 hours in connection with the same case, the Interfax news agency reported. All of its employees were reportedly summoned for questioning at the time.

Rubanov is not the first of Navalny's associates to be targeted by authorities in connection with the alleged painting theft. The homes of two activists from Navalny's Anti-Corruption Fund, Georgy Alburov and Nikita Kulachenkov, were also searched in July.

Navalny is currently serving a suspended sentence of three-and-a-half years after being convicted in December of embezzling some 30 million rubles (\$455,000) from two companies, including a Russian branch of French cosmetics giant Yves Rocher.

Navalny, who was ordered last month to remain under house arrest until mid-February, maintains that legal proceedings against him are politically motivated.

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