

Monument to Russian Gulag Victims Damaged in St. Petersburg

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Vandals have damaged a memorial to gulag victims in St. Petersburg, removing a stone book that was part of the composition and replacing it with a cardboard sign that read: “Those who don't remember the past are doomed to seeing it repeated,” media reports said.

The fastenings that attached the 50-kilogram stone book to the memorial near the city's notorious “Kresty” jail were also gone, state-run Rossia television reported Tuesday, citing a deputy chief of St. Petersburg's central district administration, Andrei Petrov.

“The stone book has been ripped off or sawn off,” Petrov was quoted as saying.

The memorial, by sculptor Mikhail Shemyakin and architects Vyacheslav Bukhayev and Anatoly Vasilyev, features two bronze sphinxes flanking a granite composition comprised of a cross, a barred window and a stone book. This is the fifth time the memorial has been vandalized, the Russian service of RFE/RL reported.

In an attack earlier this year, vandals turned over a stone slab that was holding the book, local television station 100 TV reported.

During attempts to get the memorial protected, the architects discovered that it was not officially listed as property of the city or of a municipal museum of sculpture, and was supposed to be owned and taken care of by its designers, Bukhayev was quoted by RFE/RL as saying.

The architect and the district administration plan to appeal to the governor of the city of St. Petersburg to have the memorial maintained by the municipal government, Bukhayev said, RFE/RL reported.

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