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Thieves Rappel Into Moscow Flat to Pilfer Religious Icons, Rare Coins

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Armed burglars stole more than $17,500 worth of icons from a collector in Moscow after abseiling into his flat from the roof of an apartment block, the Interfax news agency reported Monday.

Two burglars — both wearing medical masks to cover their faces — used ropes to drop from the ninth floor of the building and enter through an open window into the property on Profsoyuznaya Ulitsa on Sunday night, the report cited a police spokesman as saying.

Once inside, the two thieves encountered the 86-year-old homeowner and his 48-year-old nurse, holding them at gunpoint while they seized 25 icons, two crosses and seven albums containing old coins, the report said.

Damages from the burglary amounted to one million rubles ($17,500 rubles), the police spokesman told Interfax, noting that the figure did not take into account the historical and cultural value of the items.

A criminal case has been opened into the matter.

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