

People Detained on Suspicion of Recruiting Moscow Student for Islamic State

By [Vasily Kolotilov](#)

October 27, 2015



Varvara Karaulova

Unidentified suspects thought to have recruited Moscow State University student Varvara Karaulova to join the Islamic State in May have been detained, Karaulova's lawyer told the Interfax news agency Tuesday.

The suspects were detained by law enforcement officials in Russia's republic of Chechnya, lawyer Alexander Karabanov told the news agency.

Karaulova had earlier been called to testify as a witness in the investigation by Russia's Investigative Committee, Karabanov said.

According to his information, a criminal case against the recruiters has already been initiated in Chechnya.

Chechen law enforcers, however, disputed the lawyer's information. The republic's Interior Minister Apti Alaudinov told Interfax that neither his office nor the local Federal Security Service (FSB) has detained anyone linked to Karaulova's case recently.

Karaulova, a 19-year-old philosophy student, was detained by Interpol and Turkish police in June after an attempt to cross the border to Syria together with a group of at least 12 Russians, media reported at the time. She was sent back to Moscow on June 12.

Karaulova's father later explained that she had attempted to join IS out of love, after getting into a correspondence with a young man from Syria who had promised to marry her, the TVC television station reported in July.

Two of Karaulova's companions in the attempt to cross the border were also detained in Chechnya. One of them had been deported from Turkey while the other had turned himself in of his own accord. In July they were charged with attempting to join an illegal armed group, media reported. It was not immediately clear whether those suspects had any connection to the arrests reported Tuesday.

Investigative Committee spokesman Vladimir Markin said in June that no criminal charges would be brought against Karaulova, though he did not explain why.

Last week a man from Russia's Krasnoyarsk region was sentenced to two years and two months in jail for attempting to join IS, the regional Prosecutor's Office reported. He had traveled from Krasnoyarsk to Moscow, planning to fly to Istanbul and later cross the Syrian border, but was detained by FSB officers at Moscow's Vnukovo Airport.

Contact the author at v.kolotilov@imedia.ru

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