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Moscow Student Arrested for Attempting to Join Islamic State

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Varvara Karaulova

Varvara Karaulova, a Moscow student who ran away from home in an attempt to join the Islamic State in May, was arrested Wednesday on suspicion of preparing to join the terrorist organization once again, the Interfax news agency reported.

Karaulova faces up to five years in jail if charged and convicted.

She has been placed under arrest for two months, until Dec. 23, a court press officer told Interfax, adding that since the initial scandal, the student had changed her name to Alexandra Ivanova.

Karaulova, a 19-year-old philosophy student at Moscow State University, was detained by Interpol and Turkish police in June after attempting to cross the border to Syria together with 13 other Russians. Karaulova was sent back to Moscow on June 12, and shortly afterward, Investigative Committee spokesman Vladimir Markin said that no criminal charges would be brought against her.

A day before her arrest Wednesday, Karaulova's house was searched by the police and she was interrogated by Investigative Committee officers, Karaulova's lawyer Alexander Karabanov told The Moscow Times on Wednesday.

The lawyer said that Karaulova had contacted someone in Syria, and her actions had been logged by security service officers.

In June, the student's father told media that Karaulova had fallen in love with a young man in Syria whom she met via the Internet and had tried to cross the border to marry him.

“Varvara needed psychological help, because the recruitment process affects a person's psychological well-being,” her lawyer Karabanov told The Moscow Times on Wednesday.

“My biggest concern as her lawyer was that she would continue to be in contact with representatives of radical sects, and that is apparently what has happened,” he said.

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