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Russian Opposition Leader Attacked in Moscow Restaurant

By The Moscow Times

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Russian opposition leader Mikhail Kasyanov

Unidentified Chechen-speaking assailants attacked and threatened opposition leader Mikhail Kasyanov at a Moscow restaurant, his allies said Tuesday, days after Chechnya's leader Ramzan Kadyrov posted an online video featuring the political activist in the crosshairs of a sniper rifle.

Kasyanov — opposition leader and former prime minister — was targeted by a "physical attack," Natalya Pelevina of the PARNAS political party that Kasyanov heads said via Twitter. The assailants spoke Chechen, she added.

The attack seemed intended as a threat, rather than a way of inflicting physical harm.

Kasyanov said he was accosted by a group of about 10 attackers, who "threw a cake at me, shouting threats against me, and then fled in cars," Interfax reported. He described the

alleged attackers as people of “non-Slavic appearance.”

Another PARNAS member, Konstantin Merzlikin, added that the attackers also hurled some other “objects” at Kasyanov, while denouncing his political views, OVD-Info news portal reported. The alleged attackers recorded the incident on a video camera, Merslikin was quoted as saying.

The politician said he filed a police report calling for “bringing the attackers to account for threats against my life and safety,” Interfax reported.

An investigation into the case was opened Wednesday, the Interfax news agency reported, citing an unidentified spokesperson for the Moscow department of the Interior Ministry.

The police refused to consider an attack on Kasyanov as a threat to his life and classified the incident as an administrative violation.

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