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Police Thwart Kidnapping of Dutch Child in Russian Region

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Police in southern Russia's city of Astrakhan have detained two men accused of trying to kidnap the 4-year-old son of a Dutch citizen for ransom, according to reports Wednesday by the Interior Ministry and the Investigative Committee.

One of the suspects had earlier worked as a driver for the Dutch businessman in Astrakhan, in the Volga Delta, and was acquainted with his family, the Interior Ministry said.

The two men, Astrakhan residents aged 32 and 36, allegedly purchased imitation handguns, masks, a getaway car and selected a location where they planned to keep the child. They followed the family for some time, monitoring the alleged targets' routine, the law enforcement agencies said.

The suspects allegedly planned to seize the child near his home and later to send a ransom note to the family with demands for 15 million rubles ($220,000).

The two men were seized by police after pulling on masks and, imitation guns in hands, headed toward the child and his mother, the law enforcement agencies said. The statements

did not specify how police learned of the attempted kidnapping, or whether the suspects were detained by officers who simply happened to be at the scene.

The Interior Ministry identified the suspects as nationals of Azerbaijan, a former Soviet republic in the Caucasus.

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