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Russia's FSB Summons Ekho Moskvy Employees for Questioning

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Russian Federal Security Service (FSB) officers have summoned several employees of the Ekho Moskvy radio station for questioning, the Meduza news website reported Tuesday.

The radio station's chief editor Alexei Venediktov said on Twitter that website chief editor Vitaly Ruvinskiy, journalist Andrei Piontkovsky, and two other members of the editorial staff will all undergo FSB questioning.

The FSB said that the summons are part of a criminal investigation it has begun into the publication of articles on the station's website that "call for actions in violation of Russia's territorial integrity and are aimed at inciting hatred or enmity on the basis of national origin," the Interfax news agency reported.

Ekho Moskvy's website in January published an article by Piontkovsky, in which he called Chechnya a "political time bomb" and suggested that it secede from the Russian Federation.

The sentences containing this suggestion were deleted from the article soon after publication.

Andrei Piontkovsky's lawyer said that he had received a message from the FSB, saying that no criminal charges have been brought against his client. However, he did not rule out that this may happen in the future.

Following the incident in January, the head of the State Duma Security and Anti-Corruption Committee Irina Yarovaya requested access to the original article from the Prosecutor General. Chechnya's parliament later lodged a similar request with the Prosecutor General's Office.

Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov called for a crackdown on Western mouthpieces in Russia who seek to "destroy our country," saying specifically that Ekho Moskvy broadcasts information "steeped in hatred for Russia."

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