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Terror Attack Targeted St. Petersburg Shopping Malls - Reports

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AP/Russian National Anti-Terrorism Committee

Members of a Russia-based terror cell arrested on Saturday had planned to attack St. Petersburg shopping malls with homemade bombs, the Kommersant newspaper reported Monday.

The city's Galereya shopping mall on Ligovsky Prospekt and Akadempark on Prospekt Nauki had both been targeted by the group, an unnamed source told the newspaper.

The men, who were detained by the Russian Federal Security Service (FSB) over the weekend, also stand accused of planning terror attacks in Moscow with firearms and explosives.

Police seized a stash of Kalashnikovs and four homemade bombs in the raid, an FSB spokesperson confirmed in a statement to the Interfax news agency. The men have already confessed to being in contact with the Islamic State, the spokesperson said.

The group, which is comprised of Tajik, Uzbek and Kyrgyz nationals, hoped that the attacks

would “prove their loyalty” to the Islamic State before they joined the group in Syria, Kommersant reported.

All of the men had reportedly emigrated to Russia in hopes of evading criminal charges in their own countries, mostly for non-terror related offenses.

The Islamic State is a terrorist organization banned in Russia.

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