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Russian Police Arrest 'Anti-Slavery Movement' Leader

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Oleg Melnikov / Facebook

On Wednesday, police outside Moscow detained Oleg Melnikov, the leader of Russia's "Anti-Slavery Movement," and another activist on suspicion of facilitating illegal immigration, according to the news site Mediazona.

Melnikov says his group was providing assistance to four freed slaves living at a factory located outside Moscow, when officers from Russia's Federal Migration Service appeared and arrested everyone. All six individuals are now in police custody.

Journalist Ksenia Leonova wrote on Facebook that Melnikov has struggled to gain access to a lawyer. Later, also on Facebook, Melnikov himself wrote, "we urgently need a lawyer," and posted a phone number.

According to Leonova, the Anti-Slavery Movement has successfully freed individuals from modern slavery in Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Ukraine, and then worked to settle these people

in Russia.

If convicted of organizing illegal immigration, Melnikov could face up to five years in prison.

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