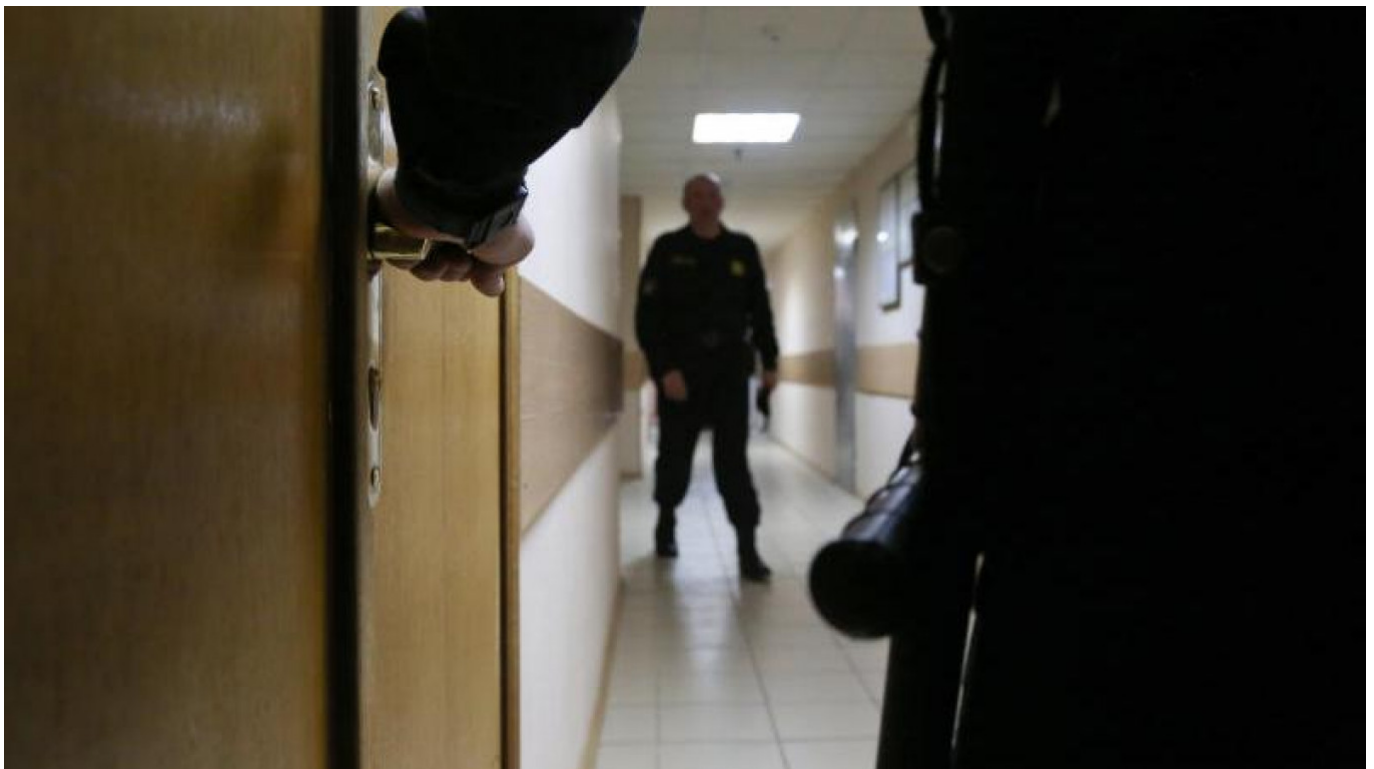


Journalists for U.S. News Group Attacked in Southern Russia

March 28, 2017



Denis Abramov / Vedomosti

Two journalists reporting on protests by farmers in Russia's Krasnodar region have been beaten and robbed by a group of masked men.

Sergei Khazov-Cassia and Andrei Kostyanov from U.S. state-funded news organization [Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty \(RFE/RL\)](#) were ambushed by men wielding cans of pepper spray as they left their hotel in the town of Kropotkin.

The attackers escaped on foot after taking a laptop, recording equipment, and the journalists' personal belongings. Kostyanov was later treated for a broken rib.

Khazov-Cassia said that the attack took place just hours after local police officers had visited them at the hotel.

Embed:

Police later recovered some of the stolen items, including the camera, Khazov-Cassia said.

"This thuggish attack on our reporters, who were acting in their professional capacity and covering an event, is unacceptable," RFE/RL President Thomas Kent said. "We demand a full investigation, with a focus on the role of local police in the incident, to ensure that this is not another crime against journalists in Russia that is met with impunity."

Related article: [Angry Farmers Stage Tractor March on Moscow](#)

Local farmers in Russia's Krasnodar region accuse large agricultural holdings of taking part in illegal land seizures.

Authorities have allowed a number of protests to take place amid low-level harassment, including a "tractor march" on Moscow in August 2016. But the protests which the journalists had been sent to cover ultimately did not take place, Khazov-Cassia said.

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