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Russian Police Uncover 'Telephone Terrorism' Ring

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Sergey Yermohin / TASS

Police have shut down an illegal mobile network operator that has been linked to hundreds of fake bomb threats across Russia.

Hundreds of thousands of people were evacuated from schools, malls and government buildings in the month of November, following anonymous phone calls, the Interfax news agency reported.

Russian law enforcement officials at the time said that some of the calls were being made from abroad.

The evacuations resulted in losses that amounted to millions of dollars, the Moscow city authorities announced in November.

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"We shut down one of the largest illegal operators that provided long-distance and international telephone services to individuals and companies," the Interior Ministry spokeswoman Irina Volk was cited as saying by Interfax on Monday.

According to Volk, the operator masked the real numbers of the calls, which allowed the perpetrators to carry out "various illegal activities, including fake terrorism threats."

"The identities of the group's members have been established," she added. "They have been detained and have provided confessions."

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