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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Russian Environmentalist Severely Beaten by Masked Assailants

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Andrei Rudomakha / Facebook

[Warning: The graphic images below may be disturbing to some readers.]

A prominent environmental activist has been beaten by masked men in the southern Russian city of Krasnodar after returning from an inspection.

Andrei Rudomakha coordinates the Environmental Watch on North Caucasus (EWNC), a regional pressure group campaigning to preserve wild nature in the region. EWNC has roiled local and federal officials by exposing land grabs and construction projects in Russia's south, including for the 2014 Sochi Olympics.

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"Andrei is severely beaten and in the hospital with a concussion and broken nose," the

pressure group wrote on its Twitter page on Friday.

Rudomakha and his colleagues were assaulted after returning from an inspection on the Black Sea coast late Thursday, the Mediazona news website cited attorney Alexei Avanesyan as saying.

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The NGO was designated as a "foreign agent" in September 2016. Organizations in the registry are subject to additional inspections and are required to submit regular reports about their funding, objectives and expenses.

EWNC's deputy coordinator Dmitry Shevchenko told the Interfax news agency that three masked assailants fled after stealing the victim's equipment and documents.

"It will be impossible to identify them," he said.

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