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Car Torched in Third Attack on Memorial Human Right Group in North Caucasus

January 23, 2018



Moskva News Agency

A service car of the Memorial human rights group was torched in the Republic of Dagestan Monday, in the third incident against the NGO in the North Caucasus region in the past month.

Arsonists torched Memorial's office in the Republic of Ingushetia last Wednesday, a week after the head of its Chechen office, Oyub Titiyev, was arrested on drug charges that his supporters dismiss as fabricated. Memorial said last week's attack was part of a coordinated campaign to drive the rights group out of the volatile region.

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The arson attack in Dagestan took place outside the driver's home late on Monday,

Memorial's project leader Oleg Orlov told the Mediazona news website Tuesday.

The torched car had been used by Titiyev's lawyer, who had visited his client's native village over the weekend, Yekaterina Sokirianskaia, the Russia-based project director of the International Crisis Group, said on Twitter.

Titiyev took over as head of Memorial's office in Chechnya after the murder of his colleague, Natalya Estimirova, in 2009. He was increasingly threatened over his work in recent years, Human Rights Watch said in a statement earlier this month, calling his drug charges an attempt to finally push Memorial out of Chechnya.

The latest attack comes less than a week after Chechnya's strongman leader Ramzan Kadyrov warned that the work of rights activists "won't fly" in the region.

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