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Russian Activist Says He Was Tortured by FSB to Retract Previous Torture Claims

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Andrei Luybimov / Moskva News Agency

A Russian anti-fascist activist accused of planning terrorist attacks has said that he was tortured in custody by security forces who demanded he retract previous torture allegations.

Dmitry Pchelintsev, 25, is one of several anti-fascists who were detained in the cities of Penza and St. Petersburg as part of a Federal Security Service's (FSB) investigation into alleged terror plots planned for the presidential elections and the World Cup. In February, Pchelintsev said he had been forced to confess to plotting the attacks after being tortured in a prison cell shortly after his arrest in October.

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Pchelintsev told his attorney that an FSB officer had ordered him to retract his previous torture allegations and to say that he had been lying, the Novaya Gazeta investigative newspaper reported this week.

“You’re an enemy and a terrorist. That’s the truth,” the officer is reported to have said, in between rounds of electrocution.

The Feb. 10 encounter, one day after Pchelintsev’s account was published on the Mediazona news website, reportedly included threats of gang-rape against his wife.

Pchelintsev said he was instructed to “do as the investigator says.”

“If they point at something white and say it’s black, you say ‘black.’ If they cut your finger and tell you to eat it, you eat it,” the officer was quoted as saying.

Attorney Oleg Zaytsev, who relayed Pchelintsev’s words to Mediazona and Novaya Gazeta, has appealed to open a criminal case into the torture allegations.

“If I once again retract my testimony about torture, confess to the absurd accusation and implicate others, or if something happens to me within the walls of pre-trial detention or the FSB — that means I was tortured again,” Pchelintsev warned.

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