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Chechnya Police Deny Detaining Dozens of Children After Terror Attacks

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Ruslan Kasumov / TASS

Chechen authorities have denied a media report saying that up to 200 local youths had been detained for interrogations in the wake of a spate of deadly attacks in the volatile Russian region last week.

The Islamic State claimed responsibility for multiple attacks in three Chechen cities on Aug. 20, releasing a video showing four boys it said were behind the coordinated act. All of the assailants, including one as young as 11, were killed in the attacks that included a botched suicide bombing and a stabbing.

Related article: Islamic State Video Claims Children Were Behind Chechnya Terror Attacks

The Kavkaz-uzel.eu news website cited local residents as saying Monday that up to 200 children had been rounded up in one of three locations where the attacks took place.

“Nobody explained anything, it all boiled down to an order from above to check teenagers for possible involvement [with Islamic State],” a Shali resident named Ahmad was quoted as saying.

“Will the security forces now see a terrorist in every teen?” another Shali resident asked.

Kavkaz-uzel.eu cited an unnamed Chechen police spokesperson as saying the interrogations were part of an ongoing investigation into the attacks.

In comments to the RBC news website, a Shalinsky district police spokesperson denied the claims that there had been mass detentions and interrogations of minors.

Meanwhile, the spokesperson acknowledged that police officers had conducted “preventative talks” with minors from the suspects’ social circle in the presence of their parents. Chechnya’s communications minister, Dzhambulat Umarov, estimated that at least one suspect in the Aug. 20 attacks had up to 60 phone contacts.

“All of this needs to be followed up on,” Umarov was quoted as saying.

Islamic State is a terrorist organization banned in Russia.

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