

# Suspected Orthodox Church Arsonist Detained in Moscow

November 08, 2018



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A 35-year-old suspect has been detained for allegedly setting fire to an Orthodox church in Moscow in the third such incident since August.

Authorities opened a criminal investigation into damage of property after the wooden St. John the Apostle Church burned down in northwestern Moscow late on Tuesday. A local activist who had opposed the construction of the church was reportedly questioned by police immediately after the incident. He was [cited](#) by media as saying that he was “absolutely not involved.”

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Local police [said](#) they apprehended an unnamed 35-year-old Muscovite on suspicion of torching the religious building.

“The perpetrator said he set fire to the church in protest against it being built in a park along the canal,” the Interior Ministry branch said Thursday.

The damage is estimated at 1 million rubles (\$15,000).

The incident comes a month after unknown arsonists [set fire](#) to a wooden church and a Sunday school building in eastern Moscow. Surveillance cameras reportedly showed a masked perpetrator pouring liquid and igniting the church grounds.

According to Interfax-Religion, the Russian Orthodox Church has [blamed](#) the arson attacks on individuals opposed to a citywide [program](#) to build or restore 200 churches.

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