

# Russian Investigative Journalist Detained in Moscow on Drug Charges

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**Ivan Golunov / Facebook**

A prominent journalist from the Meduza news website who investigates corruption has been detained in Moscow on charges of drug trafficking, the website reported on Friday.

Police apprehended special correspondent Ivan Golunov in central Moscow on Thursday afternoon and retrieved a bag containing an unknown substance from his backpack, Meduza cited his lawyer as saying. Golunov denied that the bag belongs to him.

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Police refused Golunov's request to call his lawyer, Dmitry Dzhulai, as he was being detained, Dzhulai said.

At the police station, Dzhulai said officers dragged Golunov across the floor and at least one punched him in the face and kicked him in the chest. The officers refused to call an ambulance

afterward, Meduza reported.

Police also refused to take swabs of Golunov's fingernails and backpack to check if he had touched the alleged substance.

Investigator Igor Lopatin [told](#) the BBC Russian service that Golunov was caught selling a club drug called mephedrone.

In a statement Friday, Meduza [said](#) Golunov, who [investigates corruption](#) at Moscow City Hall and [elsewhere](#), had received threats in recent months in connection to his work.

"We believe Ivan Golunov is innocent," the website said. "Moreover, we have reason to believe that Golunov is being persecuted because of his journalistic activities."

"Meduza will study every action taken by investigators in the Golunov case," the website continued. "We will find out by whose will Vanya is being pursued and we will make this information public."

Russia's Interior Ministry on Friday [published](#) nine photos, which were later [deleted](#), that it described as showing narcotic substances found in Golunov's apartment. The ministry denied reports that Golunov had been beaten after his detention. Meduza [said](#) only one of the photos was taken at Golunov's apartment and that handwriting shown in the photos doesn't match Golunov's handwriting.

*Update: Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyenin has asked the city's head of police Oleg Baranov to take personal control over Golunov's case and to evaluate the case "as objectively as possible," a spokeswoman for the mayor's office [told](#) Interfax.*

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