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Police Catch Drugging, Robbing Spree Suspect in Central Moscow

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Alexander Chizhenok / TASS

Russian police have detained a man suspected of being behind a string of druggings and robberies at popular hangout spots in central Moscow, media reported Tuesday.

Russia's The Village news website said Monday that at least 24 victims, including its photo editor, had been drugged and robbed by a single suspect in the past month. The man allegedly robbed his victims after offering them drinks laced with a substance that knocked them unconscious.

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"Police officers... detained a man who gave passersby soda, then robbed them," the Moskva News Agency quoted an unnamed law enforcement source as saying.

The source added that several packets of white powder had been seized at the suspect's

residence in the same central Moscow district where the crimes were committed.

Several unconfirmed reports identified the suspect as a 26-year-old from Russia's North Caucasus republic of Kabardino-Balkaria. Police had previously caught the suspect but released him after making him sign an agreement not to leave Moscow, The Village reported.

After his second detention, he reportedly admitted to police that he had drugged and robbed 17 people, seven of whom have been identified, the Baza Telegram channel reported.

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Video published by the Mash Telegram channel shows a self-described eyewitness describing the suspect robbing The Village's unconscious photo editor.

While most victims regained consciousness after 24 hours, some remained in a coma between three days and more than two weeks, The Village reported.

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