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Defendants in Russian Extremism Case Slit Wrists in Court

October 17, 2019



Moscow Court (Vladimir Afanasyev / TASS)

Two defendants standing trial in an extremism case slit their wrists in court on Thursday, local media reported.

In March 2018, Russian prosecutors accused 10 members of the Novoye Velichiye (New Greatness) group, most of whom are in their late teens, with extremist activities. Prosecutors say the defendants were part of a Telegram chat group that planned to topple the government. Critics of the process have said that the case was fabricated by the authorities.

"We will be free," the Dozhd news outlet quoted one of the men saying before he cut himself.

Russian media have named the two men as Ruslan Kostylenkov, 25, and Vyacheslav Kryukov, 20. Both were in pre-detention and appealing to be moved to house arrest, which, according to Kostylenkov's lawyer Svetlana Sidorkina, the judge refused.

"Their nerves just couldn't handle it anymore...All the evidence proves that they didn't

commit a crime," Sidorkina said.

Related article: How a Teenage Girl's Chat Group Became an FSB Snare

The state of the defendants is currently unknown. Both men are reportedly being treated for their injuries.

Earlier in the day, 19-year-old Anna Pavlikova, another suspect in the Novoye Velichiye case married Konstantin Kotov, 34, who last month was sentenced to four years in prison after a court convicted him of "multiple breaches" of Russian protest law. Kotov's trial and sentencing was heavily criticized by human rights activists

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