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Siberian Shaman Who Wanted to Banish Putin Banned from Leaving Hometown

By Reuters

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Authorities ordered Gabyshev to remain in the city while his case is investigated. **Screenshot Youtube**

Russia on Wednesday banned a shaman from leaving his Siberian hometown after he was detained during a second attempt to hike to Moscow on what he has called a mission to banish President Vladimir Putin from the Kremlin.

Alexander Gabyshev became a media curiosity when he set off in March on a more than 8,000-kilometer walk to Moscow, a journey he said would culminate with him driving out Russia's leader whom he described as a demon.

The trek was cut short after police detained him on a road in eastern Siberia for an unspecified crime. Amnesty International condemned his arrest and human rights activists said Gabyshev was being investigated for alleged extremism.

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It said Gabyshev "should be free to express his political views and exercise his religion just like anyone else", and that his detention was "grotesque."

Gabyshev announced on Sunday he would set off on a new hike to Moscow, but that too came to an abrupt halt when he was detained by police on Tuesday and taken back to his hometown of Yakutsk.

On Wednesday, authorities ordered him to remain in the city while his case is investigated, his lawyer, Olga Timofeyeva, said.

A court in the city also fined Gabyshev and two of his followers 1,000 rubles ($16) for not cooperating with police when they were detained, she said.

Shamanism, a belief that it is possible to communicate with and harness the energy of what practitioners perceive to be the spirit world, is practiced in various parts of Russia.

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