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Anti-Putin Shaman Charged With Sword Attack on Police

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Alexander Gabyshev, who announced plans to restart his crusade to “exorcise” Putin this spring, is accused of violently resisting detention. **Screenshot YouTube**

A Siberian shaman who was re-committed to a mental hospital ahead of his planned journey to expel President Vladimir Putin from power has been charged over a sword attack on a police officer, authorities announced Thursday.

Investigators in the Far East republic of Sakha said a 51-year-old resident resisted detention on Jan. 27 after the mental hospital treating him complained that he had failed to appear for his monthly check-up.

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“The man used an 84-centimeter handmade cold weapon and inflicted a stab wound on the police officer,” the regional Investigative Committee said without identifying Alexander Gabyshev by name.

The officer received medical treatment for his injury, it added in an online statement.

Interfax identified the weapon as a traditional Yakut long sword called a *batas*.

Gabyshev faces up to 10 years in prison if found guilty.

Gabyshev's third placement in a psychiatric hospital in the past two years came days after he announced, in a sudden about-face after his previous release from psychiatric hospital, plans to restart his crusade to "exorcise" Putin this spring.

Gabyshev said in a YouTube audio clip posted on Jan. 9 that he planned to start a new trek to the Russian capital on horseback sometime in March.

Rights groups condemned Russian authorities for Gabyshev's involuntary confinement, comparing it to Soviet-era punitive psychiatry.

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