

Russia Charges 6 After Leaks of Prison Rape Videos

By [AFP](#)

January 13, 2022



Vladimir Gerdo / TASS

Russian investigators said Thursday that six people, including two officials, had been charged over the rape and torture of prisoners in a case that drew widespread condemnation from rights groups.

A prisoner advocacy group last year published harrowing footage of sexual abuse at a jail in the central city of Saratov. It was leaked by former inmate Sergei Savelyev, who fled Russia and requested asylum in France.

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In an interview published Thursday, the head of the Investigative Committee, which handles serious crimes, said six people were facing legal action.

"Four convicts were charged with committing violent acts of a sexual nature," Alexander Bastrykin told state news agency RIA Novosti.

In addition, two officials are facing charges of abuse of power, he said, without specifying who the officials were.

"Their goal was intimidation and extortion," Bastrykin said, adding that authorities are investigating incidents involving 13 victims.

Videos of alleged rape and torture at a prison infirmary in Saratov were published by rights group Gulagu.net, which aims to expose abuses in Russia's vast prison system.

Vladimir Osechkin, who oversees Gulagu.net, has told AFP that convicts in Saratov and other facilities had been abused for years and that authorities had previously turned a blind eye to reports of mistreatment.

President Vladimir Putin dismissed the head of the Russia's prison service in November in the wake of video leaks and more than a dozen officials were fired over the revelations.

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