The Moscow Times
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Russian Anti-Torture Group Members' Homes Raided

April 28, 2023



Crew Against Torture office in Nizhny Novgorod. **Crew Against Torture**

Law enforcement authorities raided the homes of a prominent Russian anti-torture NGO's lawyers in the city of Nizhny Novgorod early Friday.

The Committee Against Torture, which changed its name to The Crew Against Torture (CAT) in June 2022, said criminal investigators arrived at the homes of its lawyers at 7:00 a.m. local time.

CAT posted a photo on its Telegram messaging app channel showing plainclothes police officers gathering outside the group's Nizhny Novgorod office.

Embed:

Emergency crews later arrived to pry open the office doors, CAT said in an update.

It was not immediately clear what charges the CAT lawyers could be facing.

CAT was founded in 2000 by Nizhny Novgorod-based rights activists to monitor cases of torture and press authorities to investigate mistreatment by security forces. The organization also offers legal and medical support to victims of torture.

Russia's Justice Ministry has repeatedly added CAT to its registry of "foreign agents" since 2015. That year, CAT's office in the North Caucasus republic of Chechnya was stormed.

The NGO disbanded after the latest designation in June 2022, only to announce its relaunch under a new name days later.

CAT's co-founder and former head Igor Kalyapin was hospitalized after being stabbed in Nizhny Novgorod last August.

The latest raids come a day after a Moscow court ruled to disband the Sova Analytical Center, one of the country's leading anti-racism research centers.

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