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Russian Anti-Torture NGO Raided by Authorities for Third Time in a Month

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Authorities in the southern Russian city of Krasnodar raided the office of prominent human rights NGO The Crew Against Torture (CAT) on Thursday.

The raid by the Russian Interior Ministry's counter-extremism unit was, according to the NGO's own Telegram channel, carried out in connection to CAT's work in the North Caucasus republic of North Ossetia-Alania where it is currently assisting an alleged torture victim.

Following the raid, Ilya Platonov, a lawyer for the NGO, was taken in for questioning.

The raid is the third time that one of CAT's Russian offices has been searched in the past month. Each search is believed to have been connected with the North Ossetia case.

Related article: Russian Anti-Torture NGO Disbands After Foreign Label

On April 14, the police raided the NGO's offices in Pyatigorsk, a resort town in the southern

Stavropol region. On April 28, Russian officials searched the homes of three of the NGO's lawyers based in the city of Nizhny Novgorod in central Russia.

CAT, which was previously known as The Committee Against Torture, was founded in 2000 by Nizhny Novgorod-based rights activists to monitor cases of torture and to press the authorities to investigate claims of abuse carried out by the security forces. The organization also offers legal and medical support to victims of torture.

Since 2015, when CAT's office in Chechnya was raided, Russia's Justice Ministry has consistently added CAT's predecessor NGOs to its register of "foreign agents."

The NGO last disbanded after receiving a fresh "foreign agent" designation in June 2022, only to announce its relaunch under a new name just days later.

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