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Russian Man Detained After Assaulting Al Jazeera Reporter

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Journalist Rania Dridi. **Rania Dridi / Instagram**

Russian authorities have detained a man in northwestern Russia suspected of assaulting an Al Jazeera reporter live on air last week, the St. Petersburg-based news website Fontanka reported Monday.

Rania Dridi was broadcasting from the former headquarters of Russia's mercenary outfit Wagner last Thursday when the man accosted her, demanding that she speak Russian during her live report.

Dridi was hospitalized with a concussion after the man struck her in the head and fled the area, Fontanka said.

An unnamed 36-year-old employee of a fruit and vegetable wholesaler was detained in the city of Petrozavodsk, some 300 kilometers northeast of St. Petersburg in connection with the assault, the outlet added Monday.

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Investigators opened a criminal investigation and placed the man in a temporary detention center, according to Fontanka.

The man was previously reported to be convicted of fraud and was working at his brother's company at the time of the attack.

Fontanka noted that Dridi, a Palestinian national, has so far abstained from commenting on the assault. Her X (formerly Twitter) social media account makes no mention of last week's attack.

Supporters of Wagner chief Yevgeny Prigozhin created a makeshift memorial outside of the private military company's former headquarters in St. Petersburg after he was reported killed in a plane crash last week.

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