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Russian Activist Found in Moscow Jail After Disappearing in Kyrgyzstan

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Lev Skoryakin. **Social Media**

Russian left-wing activist and anarchist Lev Skoryakin has been found inside a Moscow detention center weeks after going missing in the Central Asian republic of Kyrgyzstan, the Memorial human rights group said Friday.

Skoryakin was allegedly tortured at Moscow's Butyrka detention center after being abducted from a Kyrgyz jail on Oct. 17 and flown to Moscow the next day, Memorial said without specifying who was behind the activist's forcible transfer.

He faces charges of armed "hooliganism" in Russia for staging a protest with fellow activist Ruslan Abasov against the Federal Security Service (FSB) in 2021 with the use of a flare gun.

Both had managed to flee Russia after serving more than six months in detention.

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Kyrgyz authorities initially refused to extradite Skoryakin because he had applied for political asylum.

“Skoryakin was most likely pressured to say that he had allegedly decided to return to Russia independently and of his own free will,” Memorial said.

Skoryakin’s plans to travel from Kyrgyzstan to Germany — where he received a humanitarian visa — were foiled after the Kyrgyz authorities confiscated his Russian passport, according to the human rights group.

Kyrgyz authorities previously detained Skoryakin in June and held him in detention until September.

Memorial has recognized both Skoryakin and Abasov as political prisoners over violations of their freedom of assembly.

A number of anti-Kremlin activists have been extradited from or refused entry to countries neighboring Russia since Moscow invaded Ukraine in early 2022.

Russian authorities have cracked down on domestic critics with a range of criminal prosecutions in their effort to stifle dissent.

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