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Deputy Police Chief in Russia's Dagestan Arrested After Anti-Israeli Riots

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A square near the Dagestan government building in Makhachkala. **Alexander Ryumin / TASS**

Updated to include official confirmation of Ismailov's arrest.

The deputy police chief of Russia's North Caucasus republic of Dagestan has been arrested over a week after an anti-Israeli mob stormed a local airport, state media reported Tuesday.

Searches were underway at the home and workplace of Dagestan's Deputy Interior Minister Rufat Ismailov, according to the TASS news agency.

Agents from Russia's Federal Security Service (FSB) carried out the searches, an anonymous Dagestani law enforcement source told the state-run RIA Novosti.

The FSB later on Tuesday confirmed Ismailov's arrest and said criminal bribery charges had been pressed against him.

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The police chief's deputy Dalgat Abdulgapurov was arrested on similar bribery charges and both were flown to Moscow, according to Shamil Khadulayev, chairman of Dagestan's NGO coordinating council.

Reports of the senior police officers' detentions came amid growing criticism of law enforcement authorities in Dagestan over their failure to prevent the anti-Israeli violence that broke out at the Machalcalka International Airport on Oct. 29.

An estimated 1,200 people descended on the airport after social media posts claimed that a flight of "Israeli refugees" was to arrive from Tel Aviv.

Police arrested over 200 people, 155 of whom have faced administrative charges, while 15 others were sentenced to 3-8 days in jail on misdemeanor charges ranging from petty hooliganism to participating in an unauthorized rally.

It was not clear if Ismailov's and Abdulgapurov's arrests were connected to the airport riot.

The Kremlin has blamed the violence on foreign interference and expressed support for Dagestan's governor in his efforts to restore order.

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