

# Activist ‘Tricked’ Into Leaving Georgia Moved to Central Russian Detention Center

December 05, 2023



Rafail Shepelev. **Social media**

A left-wing activist who was “tricked” by Russian security services into leaving Georgia has turned up at a pre-trial detention facility in central Russia, the human rights organization Perviy Otdel [reported](#) Tuesday.

Rafail Shepelev went missing in the Georgian capital of Tbilisi on Oct. 12 and was [found](#) a month later inside a detention center in southern Russia on unspecified criminal charges.

“Shepelev was the victim of a provocation by Russian law enforcement,” Perviy Otdel said.

According to the organization, Russian security services “tricked” Shepelev, who had been living in exile for the past two years, into entering the breakaway Georgian region of South Ossetia, from which he was taken to Russia and charged with terrorism.

**Related article:** [Russian Activist Found in North Ossetia Jail After Disappearing in Georgia](#)

Perviy Otdel said that last week Shepelev was taken to a pre-trial detention center in Nizhny Tagil, located in central Russia's Sverdlovsk region, following stops in seven other Russian cities over the past 45 days.

The activist faces up to 20 years in prison on charges of participating in the activities of a terrorist organization and up to seven years for justifying terrorism, according to the organization.

Shepelev was identified as a member of Artpodgotovka (Russian for "artillery preparation"), a left-wing ultranationalist opposition group spearheaded by exiled video blogger Vyacheslav Maltsev.

Russian authorities banned Artpodgotovka as an extremist organization in 2017 after Maltsev staged an [anti-government rally](#) on the centenary of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution.

Original url:

<https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2023/12/05/activist-tricked-into-leaving-georgia-moved-to-central-russian-detention-center-a83315>