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Russia Charges Leftist Activist Udaltsov With 'Justifying Terrorism'

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Sergei Udaltsov. **Sergei Kiselev / Moskva News Agency**

Updated with court order.

A Moscow court on Friday jailed left-wing activist Sergei Udaltsov until Feb. 15 after he was detained and charged with justifying terrorism in social media posts, state media reported.

Udaltsov, who heads the socialist group Left Front, has been a vocal participant in anti-Kremlin demonstrations dating back to mass rallies held in 2012.

In 2014, he was sentenced to four-and-a-half years in prison for organizing protests that resulted in clashes with police on the eve of President Vladimir Putin's 2012 inauguration. He was released in August 2017.

Early Wednesday, Udaltsov wrote on the messaging app Telegram that police were trying to break into his home.

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The activist's lawyer Violetta Volkova on Thursday told the state-run TASS news agency that authorities seized his personal electronic devices.

She did not say which of Udaltsov's social media posts might have led authorities to charge him with justifying terrorism.

Officials from Russia's Investigative Committee, which probes major crimes, then took the activist in for questioning, Volkova told Interfax.

He could face up to seven years in prison if found guilty of justifying terrorism.

During a closed hearing on Friday, Moscow's Basmany Court ordered Udaltsov's arrest, with the activist saying that the authorities charged him over social media posts he had made about a group of Marxists who were arrested in the city of Ufa on terrorism offenses.

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