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Police Raid, Detain Artists and Activists Across Russia

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Artist Yegor Kholtov. **Yegor Kholtov / VK**

Police officers have raided the homes of several artists and activists across Russia, the Setevyye Svobody (Network Freedoms) NGO reported on Tuesday.

Setevyye Svobody linked the raids to a criminal case against exiled Russian-Canadian activist and Pussy Riot member Pyotr Verzilov, who is reportedly accused of treason.

In St. Petersburg, political artist and activist Katrin Nenasheva and artists Natasha Chetverio and Sasha Blot were searched by police, Setevyye Svobody said.

In Moscow, a friend of street artist Filipp Kozlov, who goes by the name Philippenzo, was reportedly taken in for interrogation.

Police searched the Moscow apartment of Margarita Konovalova, also known as Rita Flores, who is a member of the punk protest collective Pussy Riot.

Another Pussy Riot member, Olga Pakhtusova, was also visited by police, the independent

news website Mediazona said without providing additional details. Her current whereabouts are unknown.

Embed:

> Video of artist Katrin Nenasheva's apartment looks after an FSB search. She is taken for questioning in connection to a treason case against Pussy Riot member Pyotr Verzilov. Other artists who were paid a visit today: Olga Pakhtusova, Artem Filatov, Olga Kuracheva
>
> Video: SOTA pic.twitter.com/3TB6YOgrYz
>
> — Mediazona English (@mediazona_en) March 12, 2024

Similarly, Pussy Riot member Olga Kuracheva was taken away for interrogation after a police raid, Mediazona reported, citing a friend of hers.

In Yekaterinburg, artist Ilya Chistykh, who goes by the name Ilya Mozgi, was taken for interrogation after police searched his apartment.

Artist Artyom Filatov was detained following a police search in Nizhny Novgorod.

Later on Tuesday, rights watchdog OVD-Info reported that two more artists in St. Petersburg had been targeted in police raids.

The raids and interrogations come one day after a Moscow court overturned the jail sentence against Verzilov and sent his case for review.

Law enforcement also searched the apartment of Verzilov's mother Elena on Tuesday, Setevyye Svobody reported.

Related article: Russia Overturns 'War Fakes' Sentence Against Activist Pyotr Verzilov

Verzilov, 36, was sentenced to 8.5 years in prison in absentia for spreading "deliberately false" information about the Russian military over his social media posts about Russian troops' execution of civilians in Bucha, Ukraine.

Last year, Verzilov also revealed in an interview with popular YouTuber Yury Dud that he serves as an intelligence officer for the Ukrainian military.

Verzilov fled Russia in 2020 amid police searches at his and his relatives' homes after he was charged with failing to inform the authorities about his Canadian citizenship.

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