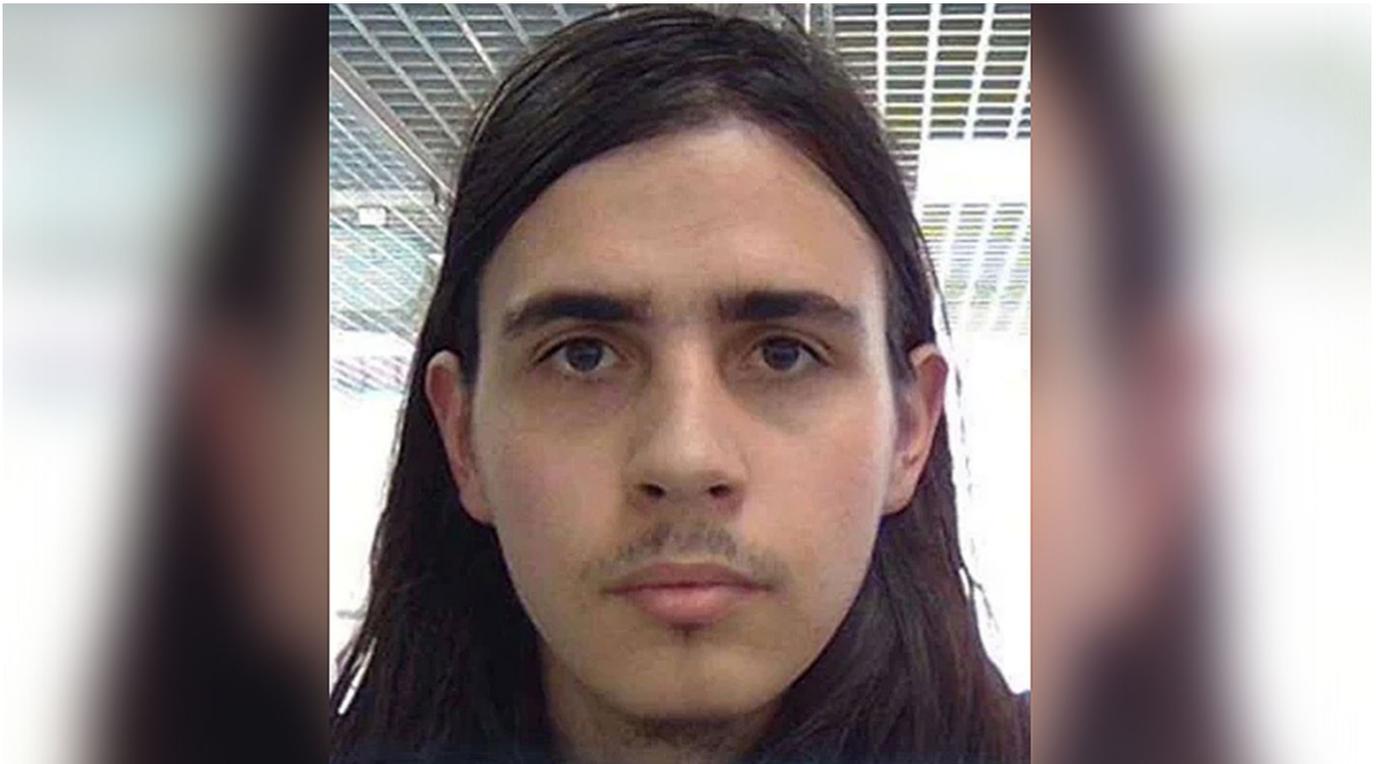


Georgian Police Arrest Russian Man at Anti-Government Protest – Reports

May 10, 2024



Andrei Rautberg. **Social media**

Law enforcement authorities in the South Caucasus nation of Georgia have arrested a Russian man who attended recent protests against a controversial “foreign influence” bill, local media [reported](#) Friday.

Members of the Russian diaspora have [joined](#) tens of thousands of Georgians in Tbilisi since April to rally against what has been described as a copycat of Russia’s “foreign agent” law.

The pro-government Imedia news outlet, citing anonymous sources, reported that Russian national Andrei Rautberg is among six “violent” protesters who were [arrested](#) at demonstrations between mid-April and early May.

“According to his own statement, he has depression and went to the rally with the aim of hurting someone,” Imedia reported without specifying whether its source works for law enforcement.

The news outlet said that Rautberg is also suspected of “engag[ing] in the illegal purchase, storage, and distribution of narcotic drugs,” accusations which he is said to “categorically” deny.

Related article: [‘My Moral Compass Demands It’: Russian Emigres Rally Alongside Georgians Against ‘Foreign Influence’ Bill](#)

Popular Russian blogger Nikolai Levshits, who writes about life in Georgia, [said](#) Rautberg is accused of assaulting a police officer and damaging video surveillance cameras during anti-government demonstrations. The blogger did not say how he had come by that information.

Rautberg may have fled his native Belgorod region in the fall of 2022 after President Vladimir Putin declared a “partial” mobilization of reservists, Levshits wrote on Telegram.

The Telegram news channel Ostorozhno Novosti [reported](#) that the 21-year-old was still in Belgorod as of late 2022 but did not specify when he had arrived in Georgia.

Thousands of military-age men fled to Georgia following the Kremlin’s announcement of a “partial” mobilization in September 2022. Many have since remained in the country.

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