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Moscow Activist Kotov Detained for Allegedly Donating to Navalny's 'Extremist' Groups

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Konstantin Kotov. **t.me/ovdinfo**

An activist who previously served prison time for breaking Russian protest laws was detained for donating money to Alexei Navalny's outlawed political organizations, independent media reported Thursday.

Programmer Konstantin Kotov was arrested during the 2019 Moscow election protests and ended up serving 18 months for "multiple breaches" of Russian protest laws. His original four-year sentence was reduced after President Vladimir Putin instructed prosecutors to review his sentence.

Rights groups said Wednesday that law enforcement authorities searched Kotov's home and took him in for questioning as part of a criminal investigation into alleged donations he made to Navalny's political organizations.

In 2021, a Russian court designated Navalny's political and activist networks as "extremist," forcing many of his allies into exile as others faced criminal prosecution under a range of charges. Financing an extremist group carries a punishment of up to eight years in prison.

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According to independent news outlet Mediazona, a Moscow court ruled behind closed doors Thursday to place Kotov under house arrest until Oct. 19, granting a request issued by investigators.

Kotov was alleged to have donated 3,000 rubles ($32.60) to Navalny's organizations.

Mediazona said the court issued the same ruling for another activist, Viktor Levakov, who was accused of making three donations totaling 3,500 rubles ($37.87).

Levakov, whose home was also searched Wednesday, was identified as a volunteer security guard at a makeshift memorial to the murdered opposition figure Boris Nemtsov.

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