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Russia's Youngest Political Prisoner, 16, Says Beaten by Cellmate

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Arseniy Turbin. **Social media**

A 16-year-old Russian schoolboy considered the country's youngest political prisoner said he has been subjected to beatings by his cellmates in the Moscow detention center where he's currently being held, the independent Mediazona news website reported Tuesday.

Arseniy Turbin, who is serving five years in a juvenile colony for allegedly attempting to join the Freedom of Russia Legion, said that he was being beaten by a cellmate named Azizbek.

"Tonight after 18:00 he hit me on the head with his fist on the bed two times. The atmosphere is very heavy, critical. Azizbek beat me and told me that at night I would be f***ed," Turbin wrote in an Oct. 1 letter to his mother. "The night will be very hard. But I will hold on."

Turbin's mother told Mediazona that Turbin was also placed in solitary confinement for a week in September after a conflict in his cell.

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Turbin was sentenced to five years at a juvenile correctional facility in June, when he was 15, on charges of "participating in terrorist activities."

Prosecutors accused him of trying to join the Freedom of Russia Legion, a paramilitary unit of Russian nationals fighting on the side of Ukraine, which Moscow designated as a terrorist organization.

According to Mediazona, FSB investigators falsified the evidence in Turbin's case.

FSB agents claimed Turbin had admitted during an interrogation — which was recorded — that he "planned to join the legion and send in a completed questionnaire."

But a transcript of the interrogation published by Mediazona shows that Turbin made no such admission despite the FSB agents' attempt to lead him on.

The Nobel Peace Prize-winning Memorial human rights organization has designated Turbin as a political prisoner.

Russia's state financial watchdog last fall added Turbin to its list of "terrorists and extremists."

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