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Russian Police Raid Homes of Romani People After Ethnic Tensions Flare in Chelyabinsk Region

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Social media

Police in Russia's Chelyabinsk region detained around 20 Roma for "crime prevention talks" after ethnic tensions flared last week over a woman's murder, local media reported Sunday.

Enraged residents in the town of Korkino gathered Thursday night outside homes believed to belong to Roma, where they damaged property and clashed with riot police. The unrest came amid rumors that two Romani men stabbed a woman to death.

At the time, local media identified the murdered woman as Yelena Sarafanova, a mother of two and a taxi driver. However, regional authorities referred to her by the name of Yelena Manzhosova.

Regional investigators arrested a 17-year-old male in Korkino on suspicion of killing the woman, who had been driving him home as a passenger. Police were reportedly "looking

into" another male as part of the ongoing murder investigation.

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After a video circulating on social media showed uniformed agents escorting a group of men into a police van, law enforcement officials in the Chelyabinsk region confirmed that 20 Roma had been detained in the town of Troitsk on Sunday.

"They were given preventive talks about the inadmissibility of committing offenses and were then released," the 74.ru news website quoted the regional branch of Russia's Interior Ministry as saying.

On Saturday, Chelyabinsk region Governor Alexei Teksler ordered police raids at the homes of Romani residents as he reprimanded local authorities for "failing to identify an ethnic conflict," which spilled out into last week's clashes between riot police and an angry mob.

Last week, Russia's Investigative Committee, which probes major crimes, decried "long-standing concerns about the Romani community's unlawful behavior, which has not been resolved."

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