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Yekaterinburg Journalist 'Fled' From Police Before Court Hearing – Kommersant

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The chief editor of the Yekaterinburg-based newspaper Vechernye Vedemosti fled from police custody before he was scheduled to appear in court for allegedly displaying extremist symbols in public, Kommersant reported Friday, citing an unnamed source.

Earlier on Friday, the exiled news outlet Mediazona reported that editor Vladislav Postnikov, who was expected to be released from administrative detention in the city of Nizhny Tagil, was taken away in a police vehicle and brought to an Interior Ministry building in Yekaterinburg.

As a result, Postnikov did not show up to a scheduled court hearing. An unnamed source told Kommersant that the journalist allegedly fled from police, who were preparing to press new charges against him, after he was brought to Yekaterinburg.

Postnikov's whereabouts were not immediately known.

The editorial board of Vechernye Vedemosti claimed that police illegally detained Postnikov on Friday as no official reason was provided for why they were taking him away despite his scheduled release.

"According to the Russian Criminal Code and the Constitution, Postnikov has been free since 11:30 a.m. on March 28," the editorial board was quoted as saying by Kommersant.

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Postnikov's lawyer also said that no official police report was filed for the detention of his client.

"Once he is properly summoned to sign the police report, he will appear [before law enforcement officials]," the lawyer said. "No transportation or detention reports have been filed."

Postnikov had been serving consecutive 14-day detention sentences since Feb. 28. He was charged on March 1 with publically displaying extremist symbols for a 2021 Telegram post featuring a symbol associated with late opposition activist Alexei Navalny.

The newspaper editor was detained again on March 14 for posts showing symbols of the banned Other Russia party, which split from the National Bolshevik Party.

Vechernye Vedemosti journalists suspect that the police are targeting Postnikov in retaliation for the newspaper's March 2022 coverage of an anti-war rally in Yekaterinburg.

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