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3 Arrested in Urals News Outlet Leak Probe

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The Ura.ru Editorial office in Yekaterinburg. **MT**

Law enforcement authorities on Thursday arrested three employees of Ura.ru, a pro-Kremlin news outlet, in a probe over reports citing anonymous law enforcement sources, the state-run TASS news agency reported.

Denis Allayarov, the Sverdlovsk region editor, was reportedly detained at his Yekaterinburg home and denied access to a lawyer. According to ura.ru, authorities have gained access to Allayarov's phone.

Later on Thursday, Allayarov was charged with the bribery of a public official, according to the Kommersant business news agency, citing a source in law enforcement.

Authorities also apprehended correspondent Sergei Bodrov and journalist Anna Salymskaya, TASS said.

"The investigators are interested in the sources of information related to crime reports in the

Sverdlovsk region," ura.ru wrote without specifying which crimes they are accused of.

"However, the investigation into the Sverdlovsk editorial office, which employs 10 people, has stopped the work of the entire agency, which employs more than 200 people in eight Russian regions," it added.

The outlet published a video showing plainclothes and masked officers escorting Allayarov into a van and ignoring his lawyer's questions.

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Other videos showed a police raid on ura.ru's editorial office, which included a masked agent wielding a bat.

Ura.ru said investigators used force against editor-in-chief Diana Kozlova during the raid. She is said to be undergoing a medical examination.

Founded in 2006, ura.ru was initially known for investigative journalism and critical reporting on local authorities in Russia's Ural Mountains region.

Its founder, Aksana Panova, was ousted in 2012 after being accused of fraud and extortion, leading to management changes and a change in its editorial direction.

Independent investigative outlet Proekt reported in 2022, when Russia invaded Ukraine, that ura.ru had stopped critical coverage of the Russian Defense Ministry and published numerous articles praising one of its commanders in exchange for financial rewards.

Artyom Bikov and Alexei Bobrov, Russian-born businessmen with Austrian citizenship, are thought to be the beneficiaries of ura.ru, according to exiled former Yekaterinburg-based journalist Dmitry Kolezev.

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