

Altai Protest Leader Arrested on Terrorism Charges

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Aruna Arna. **SOTAvision**

Law enforcement authorities in Siberia's republic of Altai [said](#) Wednesday that they arrested a local activist suspected of publicly inciting terrorism, a move that comes amid a wider crackdown against opponents of controversial municipal reforms.

The local branch of Russia's Investigative Committee, which probes major crimes, said it placed a "moderator of a public group on Telegram" in temporary detention. The agency said it would seek a court order for pre-trial custody.

Though officials did not name the person, local activists identified her as Aruna Arna, a prominent figure in protests against a Kremlin-backed [governance overhaul](#) and the expansion of Moscow-owned businesses in the republic.

State financial watchdog Rosfinmonitoring [added](#) Arna to its federal register of "terrorists and extremists" last month.

Arna [shared](#) on social media the first few seconds of a police search at her home on Wednesday. In the video, police could be seen forcing their way into her apartment and shouting at the people inside to lie on the floor.

Related article: [In Altai Republic, a Kremlin-Backed Government Reform Aids the Tycoons](#)

In a separate video, her mother [claimed](#) that armed riot police had seized money and personal electronics and taken her daughter away while leaving behind three children, including an infant.

Searches were also reported at the homes of other activists and that of Arna's mother.

Fellow activists [told](#) independent media that Arna had been planning to travel to Moscow on the day of her arrest to deliver signatures demanding the resignation of Altai's head Andrei Turchak.

Protests against Turchak have [roiled](#) the region since the controversial municipal reforms were introduced this summer.

The reforms merged many rural districts into larger, more consolidated districts, where a number of [elections](#) took place earlier this month.

Critics say the overhaul strips residents of local political representation and hands Moscow tighter control over regional government.

In August, the Altai Supreme Court rejected a lawsuit challenging the municipal reform passed by the regional parliament, sparking large protests in the capital city of Gorno-Altaysk.

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