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Moscow Graduate Arrested on Treason Charges After 'Carousel Arrests'

December 02, 2025



Leonid Katz. **Social media**

A judge has placed a 22-year-old graduate of Moscow's Higher School of Economics (HSE) in pre-trial detention on charges of state treason after two months of being rotated in and out of detention, according to court records cited by the exiled news outlet Mediazona on Tuesday.

Leonid Katz had been subjected to four consecutive administrative arrests — known as "carousel arrests" — since Oct. 1, according to the BBC Russian service. Each arrest was carried out immediately after his release, often under minor charges like "disobeying police orders" or "using obscenities."

According to Mediazona, Moscow's Meshchansky District Court received a request from investigators to hold Katz in detention on treason charges the same day he was due to be released after serving 15 days in jail for using obscene language.

Katz's lawyer declined to comment on the case.

Related article: ‘Carousel Arrests’: Inside Russia’s Tactic for Keeping Detainees Locked Up

The details of the accusations against Katz remain unknown. Treason and other criminal cases related to issues of national security in Russia are often heard behind closed doors.

In February 2021, while still a minor, Katz was detained for participating in protests against the arrest of the late opposition figure Alexei Navalny, according to BBC Russia.

HSE is one of Russia’s premier universities and for years was considered a bastion of liberal values amid the government’s widening campaign to promote conservative ideas and so-called “traditional values.”

While HSE remains one of Russia’s top-rated institutions of higher learning in the social sciences, the university’s administration has increasingly bent to political pressure from the authorities and cracked down on dissent among students and staff, especially since the full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

Original url:
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