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Police Raids Target Russian Communist Party Members in Altai Region

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Communist Party member Yury Kropotin. **kprf.ru**

Police in western Siberia's Altai region carried out raids targeting the local branch of Russia's Communist Party on Thursday, arresting at least two regional lawmakers in what party officials denounced as political pressure ahead of elections later this year.

The Investigative Committee, Russia's top investigative body, accused two Communist Party lawmakers of embezzling around 4.6 million rubles ($60,500) through fictitious employment schemes between 2021 and 2025.

While investigators did not name the lawmakers, their descriptions matched those of Andrei Chernobay and Yury Kropotin.

Kropotin serves as deputy speaker of the Altai region's regional assembly. Chernobay sits on the legislature's committee on sport, culture and youth policy.

The Communist Party, Russia's second-largest political party, criticized the arrests as "yet

another wave of pressure" against its members in the Altai region.

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Anton Artsibashev, a Communist Party lawmaker in the Altai assembly, claimed the arrests came after warnings from Kremlin officials that the party should not challenge the ruling United Russia party in regional elections scheduled for September.

"This is an act of intimidation," Artsibashev wrote in a post shared by the Communist Party's Telegram channel. "However, we'll continue to fight. They won't succeed in scaring us."

The Communist Party currently holds 18 of 68 seats in the Altai region's legislative assembly, second to United Russia's 34 seats.

Maria Prusakova, a Communist Party lawmaker in the lower-house State Duma, said the raids also targeted Daria Zulina, deputy head of the party's regional branch, as well as "several active party members."

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