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Moscow Police Raid Novaya Gazeta's Newsroom

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Vladimir Gerdo / TASS

Russia's oldest independent newspaper Novaya Gazeta said Thursday that police were carrying out a search of its Moscow office.

Novaya Gazeta, which said masked security officers entered its newsroom around noon, did not immediately know the reason for the search.

The newspaper said its lawyers were not being allowed to enter the building.

Russia's Interior Ministry later confirmed the search was part of a criminal probe into the "illegal use, transfer or storage of information containing personal data."

The ministry said an unidentified "group of individuals" obtained and used personal information in news articles and online content that "painted a negative picture of Russians."

Novaya Gazeta was not explicitly mentioned in the Interior Ministry's press release, but a police spokesperson told Interfax that employees of the newspaper are under investigation.

The state-run news agency RIA Novosti later reported that Novaya Gazeta's executive director, Oleg Roldugin, was arrested on Thursday and taken in for questioning.

Novaya Gazeta ceased print publication shortly after the full-scale invasion of Ukraine due to draconian censorship laws that the government passed as part of a broader crackdown on the press.

The newspaper has continued to publish articles and videos online.

Novaya Gazeta's former editor-in-chief, Dmitry Muratov, won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2021 for his "efforts to safeguard freedom of expression."

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