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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Yabloko Leader Demands Investigation After Political Analyst Was Reportedly Tortured During Arrest

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Alexander Kynev. **Social media**

Yabloko party Chairman Nikolai Rybakov said Wednesday that he formally asked Russian law enforcement authorities to investigate reports that independent political analyst Alexander Kynev was beaten and tortured following his arrest in Moscow last week.

Rights groups have said that Kynev was hospitalized at a medical facility inside a Moscow detention center for bone fractures and other injuries after his arrest on drug charges. Officials have not commented on those allegations.

"I believe those responsible should not only be named and punished, but immediately dismissed from law enforcement agencies," Rybakov wrote in a post on Telegram. "Regardless of how state security agencies feel about the detainee, torture and violence are categorically unacceptable."

Exiled Russian political commentator Ekaterina Shulmman, who knows Kynev personally, claimed on Tuesday that police officers broke one of his legs and electrocuted him in what she described as an attempt to make him confess to treason charges. She did not say where she had received that information.

Kynev's attorney later denied Shulmann's claim, stating he was unaware of any evidence that his client was tortured or faced allegations of treason. The drug charges Kynev currently faces, and which he has denied, carry a maximum sentence of 20 years in prison.

Related article: Moscow Police Arrest Political Expert Alexander Kynev on Drug Charges

News of Kynev's arrest came the same day that Russian election authorities announced the final results of this month's parliamentary elections, which handed the ruling United Russia party an unprecedented supermajority in the lower-house State Duma.

Independent experts have described the elections as the least competitive in Russia's modern history. Voters were left with virtually no real opposition option after Yabloko, Russia's oldest liberal party and the only registered political force campaigning for peace, was struck from the party-list ballot by the Russian Supreme Court in August.

Kynev, who wrote regular opinion columns for The Moscow Times before it was designated an "undesirable" organization in 2024, chose to remain in Russia despite his public criticism of the government and the invasion of Ukraine.

Russia's Justice Ministry designated Kynev a "foreign agent" in February. Over the years, he has worked for a number of independent political organizations, including the now-disbanded election observer Golos.

Separately, Rybakov was himself briefly detained on Tuesday and charged with disorderly conduct for spoiling his ballot during the Sept. 20 elections at a St. Petersburg polling station.

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