

Kazakhstan Arrests Russian Rapper Navai on Drug Smuggling Charges

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navaib / Instagram

A court in Kazakhstan has reportedly placed popular Russian hip-hop artist Navai in pre-trial detention after border authorities arrested him on suspicion of drug smuggling.

Navai Bakirov, 31, was [detained](#) on Tuesday at a border checkpoint while attempting to cross into Kazakhstan from neighboring Kyrgyzstan.

The Korday District Court ordered Bakirov to be placed in pre-trial detention for two months, Telegram news channel Baza [reported](#) on Thursday.

According to the report, Bakirov had allegedly admitted during police questioning to purchasing the drugs in the Kyrgyz capital of Bishkek, where he performed on Monday.

Baza, which is purported to have links to Russia's security services, [claimed](#) Kazakh border guards uncovered 2.5 grams of marijuana in Bakirov's vehicle after being alerted by a sniffer dog.

Bakirov's arrest led to the cancellation of his concert in Astana on Wednesday. His show in Chisinau, Moldova, was rescheduled from this Friday to Dec. 8.

The Samara native rose to prominence across the post-Soviet space as part of the hit-making duo HammAli & Navai before launching a solo career.

Bakirov's legal trouble in Central Asia comes nearly one month after he [resolved](#) a separate civil dispute in Moscow by compensating the city for damages caused when he crashed his Ferrari in central Moscow in May.

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