

5 Russian Journalists Detained and Fed Cookies in Libya

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The  **Moscow Times**

Libyan rebels detained five journalists from Komsomolskaya Pravda and NTV television for 11 hours — but released them after a snack of cookies.

The Russians were stopped while attempting to travel to the south of the conflict-torn country, Komsomolskaya Pravda journalist Dmitry Steshin [said](#).

The region receives little attention from war correspondents because most fighting is taking place in the northern part of Libya, but the Russians wanted to investigate reports about forces loyal to Moammar Gadhafi bombing oil fields there, Steshin said in a report on his newspaper's web site.

The journalists were detained by rebels who were retreating from the contested town of Ajdabiyah to the insurgency stronghold of Benghazi, Interfax reported.

During their 11 hours in custody, the Russians were questioned by unidentified rebels who apparently suspected them of being Belarussian mercenaries looking to cross the front line

to join Gadhafi, Steshin said. Ironically, Komsomolskaya Pravda was one of the first media outlets to report about the possibility of Belarussian mercenaries joining forces with Gadhafi.

The journalists were treated well and offered food and drink, Steshin said. Interfax said they were given a pack of cookies each and allowed to keep their satellite phones.

The rebels released the five late Friday.

In March, Gadhafi loyalists detained four reporters from The New York Times, including Pulitzer Prize laureate Anthony Shadid. They received worse treatment than the Russians with the rebels, reporting afterward that they were beaten and threatened with death during several days in captivity.

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