

European Court to Question Russia Over Razvozzhayev

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Razvozzhayev has said masked men seized him in Kiev, subjected him to death threats and forced him to write a confession saying he had plotted to foment political unrest.

The European Court of Human Rights has asked Russia and Ukraine to provide information about the criminal case against opposition activist Leonid Razvozzhayev, his lawyer Anna Stavitskaya said.

Stavitskaya told Interfax on Friday that Razvozzhayev's lawyers had addressed the court with a request to "urgently interfere" with the criminal case against their client and learned from the court Friday that it wanted to question Russian and Ukrainian authorities.

Meanwhile, the Investigative Committee said Friday that it had received evidence that Razvozzhayev and his accomplices in the case — Left Front leader Sergei Udaltsov and his aide Konstantin Lebedev — attended training abroad while preparing to orchestrate mass riots.

Razvozhayev's former girlfriend, Samira Bader, daughter of Khalid Bader, a powerful businessman in Kuwait, told investigators that Razvozhayev regularly met and received money from Georgian politicians, NTV state television reported.

Bader recently broke up with Razvozhayev after finding out that he had a wife, NTV said.

Razvozhayev, an activist with the Left Front opposition movement, was arrested in Moscow in late October on charges of plotting mass riots after allegedly turning himself in to investigators, according to the Investigative Committee.

The charges against Razvozhayev stemmed from a documentary-style program titled "Anatomy of a Protest 2" that was broadcast on NTV in early October.

Razvozhayev has said masked men seized him in Kiev, subjected him to death threats and forced him to write a confession saying he had plotted to foment political unrest.

After this, he said, he was driven to Moscow and handed over to investigators.

In early November, Razvozhayev retracted his confession. In late November, the Investigative Committee refused to open a criminal case into Razvozhayev's claims that he had been tortured, citing a lack of evidence.

Last week, the pro-government Izvestia daily cited sources in the security services as saying that businessman Bader was close to criminal circles and that he "contributed" to Razvozhayev's return from Kiev after learning of videos in which Razvozhayev is seen having sex with a woman resembling his daughter.

In "Anatomy of a Protest 2," NTV reporters said hidden-camera footage showed Razvozhayev, Left Front leader Sergei Udaltsov and his aide Konstantin Lebedev meeting with senior Georgian officials in the Belarussian capital, Minsk, in June.

NTV said that during the meeting the opposition trio received instructions on how to orchestrate riots.

Since the state-run channel broadcast the controversial film, Lebedev has been arrested, and Udaltsov has been questioned and released after giving a written pledge not to leave Moscow.

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