

Moscow Police Arrest Suspected Head of Uzbek Islamist Terrorist Group

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Suspected head of terrorist group has been detained near Moscow.

The leader of an outlawed terrorist group from Uzbekistan has been detained near Moscow with a stash of weapons and a phony passport, news reports said.

The suspect, believed to be the leader of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, had in his possession an AK-47 assault rifle, an altered traumatic pistol, a homemade silencer and large quantities of ammunition, Interfax said Wednesday, citing the Interior Ministry's press service.

The leader of the group was identified in the report as a 27-year-old citizen of Tajikistan who "was actively involved in recruiting migrants from Central Asia."

The report also accused members of the group of staging several armed assaults in the Moscow region.

The group is believed to be responsible for a 2012 attack on a Moscow office building that

ended with a 900,000-ruble (\$26,000) heist. Three suspects from that incident were apprehended immediately afterward, but the leader of the group managed to get away, Interfax cited the spokesperson as saying.

The Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan was set up in 1991 with the goal of creating an Islamic state of Sharia. Despite its title, the group does not limit itself to Uzbeks and includes among its ranks citizens from Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan.

It was active in Kyrgyzstan and Afghanistan in 1999 and 2000 and is believed by the U.S. State Department to receive funding from al-Qaeda.

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