

Opposition Activist Flees Russia After Threat of Arrest

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Dmitry Nekrasov

Russian opposition activist Dmitry Nekrasov has fled the country after hearing he was to be arrested on charges of financing extremism and terrorism.

Nekrasov had been due to stand for the Yabloko opposition party in Duma elections later this year.

Writing on his Facebook page, Nekrasov said he was detained by Russian security services at Moscow's Vnukovo airport on May 24 and questioned about his links to terrorist organizations. They also requested to see Nekrasov's laptop.

The following day, a friend of Nekrasov messaged to warn him about a potential criminal case that could soon be opened against him.

He left Russia for Latvia on May 26.

“I decided not to risk it [staying in Russia,]” he wrote. “Firstly just due to the sheer absurdity

of the charges. The implausibility of the very idea that I engage in terrorism between television appearances and writing is so obvious. I believe in the stupidity of humanity. Secondly, the resources that my “well-wishers” — those who would convince me that withdrawing from the elections is the easier path — seem to have,” he said.

“People can call me a coward if they want, but considering all of it, I got a lawyer, told Yabloko what was happening, and left the country via Belarus in someone else's car with my phone switched off.”

Nekrasov worked within the Kremlin before joining the opposition. He was appointed secretary of the Duma opposition council in 2012, but left his position year later to concentrate on his work supporting press freedom.

Nekrasov claimed to be under increasing FSB scrutiny in 2014, causing him to leave the country with his family. He returned after the murder of opposition leader Boris Nemtsov.

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