

# Man Who Died in Police Custody Amid Bashkortostan Protests Was Beaten to Death – RFE/RL

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Rifat Dautov. [t.me/aspecty](https://t.me/aspecty)

A man who died in police custody amid a regionwide crackdown on protesters and activists in Russia’s republic of Bashkortostan earlier this year was beaten to death by police, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty [reported](#) Wednesday, citing an independent forensic analysis conducted at the request of his family.

Rifat Dautov was among more than 80 people [arrested](#) across Bashkortostan in the aftermath of protests in support of [jailed](#) Bashkir activist Fayil Alsynov in January. Dautov was detained in the village of Novye Chebenki in the region’s southwestern Zianchurinsky district on the evening of Jan. 25 while taking a walk with his girlfriend.

Prosecutors claimed Dautov was “an active participant” of a pro-Alsynov rally outside a courthouse in the town of Baymak on Jan. 17 — which was [attended](#) by thousands of people — and that a police officer allegedly identified the man as a protester who had attacked him.

According to Idel.Realii, RFE/RL's news service for the Volga-Ural region, Dautov's family maintains that he did not take part in the protests and was visiting a doctor in the Bashkortostan capital of Ufa on the day of the Baymak rally.

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The human rights group Za Prava Cheloveka (ZPC) [first reported](#) on Jan. 26 that Dautov died in police custody after his family was asked to visit a morgue in Ufa to identify his body.

Authorities in Bashkortostan [claimed](#) that the man died from a heart attack induced by heavy intoxication — a version of events that was [actively promoted](#) by government-linked media — but his family and girlfriend insist Dautov had not been drinking on the day of his arrest.

Results of an independent forensic examination obtained by Idel.Realii suggests that Dautov was hit with a “blunt, hard object” at least 48 times while being transported to a police station in Baymak. Bruises covered at least 30% of his body, and he was believed to have lost large amounts of blood as a result of internal bleeding from injuries.

"The entire autopsy picture has excessive signs of death from huge internal blood loss," Idel.Realii [cited](#) the forensics expert as saying.

Lawyer Pavel Vasilyev, who represents Dautov's family, told Idel.Realii that Dautov's relatives are preparing to file a petition for conducting a new investigation into his death.

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