

# Russia: activist reportedly beaten and raped for reciting anti-war poem



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Girlfriend also assaulted by police and threatened with gang rape

‘It seems that Russian law-enforcement officers believe they have complete impunity’ - Natalia Zviagina

Responding to reports that the Russian poet and activist Artyom Kamardin was detained and subjected to torture - including gruesome sexual violence - by law-enforcement officers after reciting an anti-war poem online, Natalia Zviagina, Amnesty International’s Russia Director, said:

“The details of Artyom Kamardin’s arrest and torture are horrific even by the abysmal human rights standards of today’s Russia. “It seems that Russian law-enforcement officers believe they have complete impunity for all sorts of human rights violations against people who oppose Russia’s war in Ukraine. “The police did not hide the fact that they tortured Artyom Kamardin and forced him, visibly beaten, to apologise on camera for publishing a video recital of an anti-war poem. “The world must not look away but rather remind the Russian leadership: those responsible will be brought to justice for all crimes under international law, including war crimes committed in Ukraine and human rights violations committed in Russia.”

Yesterday, armed police broke into the Moscow home of Artyom Kamardin and his girlfriend Aleksandra Popova, apprehending them and their friend Aleksandr Menyukov. During the search - which their lawyer was not allowed to attend - police officers reportedly beat Kamardin and raped him with a dumbbell. According to Popova, law-enforcement

officers filmed this and forced her to watch the video.

Kamardin was then put on his knees and forced to record an “apology” video for posting a recital of the anti-war poem “Glory to Kievan Rus; Novorossiia sucks”. Popova says she was also physically and verbally assaulted by police officers, who allegedly stuck stickers to her face with superglue, pulled out her hair and threatened her with gang rape. She was later diagnosed with head injuries and bruises.

Kamardin was diagnosed with concussion, multiple bruises and other injuries, according to his lawyer. The authorities refused to hospitalise him and his health condition is unknown at the time of writing. The poet and activist was also named as a suspect in a case of “inciting hatred or enmity with the threat of violence” (Article 282(2) of the Russian Criminal Code), together with activists Nikolai Dayneko and Yegor Shtovba. If convicted, they face up to six years in prison.

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