

US DEPORTS IBRAGIM TODASHEV'S GIRLFRIEND

The Guardian and Boston Magazine report that Tatiana Gruzdeva, the woman whom FBI had apparently detained to pressure Ibragim Todashev to cooperate, is now back in Moldova after being deported to Russia. Gruzdeva had claimed she was deported for granting an interview to Boston Magazine, and that outlet quotes a lawyer explaining how that might be the case.

[I]mmigration lawyers Susan Church and Jeremiah Freedman told me Gruzdeva was most likely given something called an order of supervision—and yes, they said, under an order of supervision, the feds can deport her for speaking to the media.

Church says this proviso matches Gruzdeva's account that she was given a one-year extension to stay in America and that she was allowed to file for work papers. Orders of supervision are usually given under another legal provision called deferred action. Church says it's common for people to file for work under these circumstances.

According to Freedman, orders of supervision can include certain requirements like not speaking to the press. "If you violate the conditions of your order of supervision," he said, "they pick you up and put you in jail again." And Church says these requirements don't have to be explicit. "A person who has an overstay really doesn't have any legal rights," said Church. "They could be picked up at any time."

"That is really a privilege that is not extended to many people," said Church,

I'm as interested in this account for what it says about Gruzdeva's likely status – deferred action – as the explanation for how speaking to Boston Magazine could get her deported. Because, from what I've seen, such an extension along with work privileges is virtually unheard of in the immigration context, even for people who are far more cooperative with law enforcement than we at least understand Gruzdeva to have been.

So Gruzdeva gets that privilege, and while released spends a lot of time with Todashev's father, Abdulbaki, who is a government official in Grozny. When her roommate, Ashurmamad Miraliev, who had been close friends with Todashev and also spent time with Abdulbaki, was arrested, she went public, which led not only to accusations the FBI was recruiting members of this community as informants, but also ultimately to Gruzdeva's loss of that privilege and her deportation. While in the US, Abdulbaki was interviewed by the FBI and other law enforcement. And according to the Guardian, Gruzdeva was debriefed in Moscow before she traveled onto Moldova.

So what is the FBI (and another unnamed federal agency, on whose request Miraliev is being detained) really after here?