

Swiss Muslim Flees North Ossetia Prison

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A Swiss Muslim convert with neo-Nazi tattoos has fled a penal colony in North Ossetia just hours before his release.

Christoph Martin Häusler, who failed to show up for a roll call Thursday, likely wanted to avoid deportation to Switzerland, where he is wanted by local authorities on unspecified charges, North Ossetian police said, Itar-Tass [reported](#).

Häusler, who was serving a 10-month term for illegally crossing the border, unsuccessfully attempted to flee shortly after being detained in North Ossetia last August, the report said.

A regional television channel, Alania, aired [photos](#) of the runaway, who is 1.8 meters tall and has multiple tattoos, including a skull on the back of his head, a Celtic cross on his left forearm and the letters "SS" on his right hand.

Häusler, who remained on the run Sunday, arrived in Russia "as a tourist" from Finland in July 2010 despite not having a visa or any valid identification, the Prosecutor General's Office [said](#) last year. He was detained near a border checkpoint close to the border with Georgia's breakaway region of South Ossetia.

News reports said Häusler converted to Islam in Turkey around 2005. He was investigated for possible links to North Caucasus insurgency after his arrest last year, but no such ties have been reported, Itar-Tass said.

Both North and South Ossetia are predominantly Christian regions.

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