

Convicted Murderer Escapes Moscow Jail

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Police were searching for a convicted murderer who escaped the infamous Matrosskaya Tishina detention center in the north of Moscow early Tuesday.

Oleg Topalov, 32, who had been found guilty of murder and illegal possession of firearms, fled his cell through a hole in the ceiling at around 5 a.m, Federal Prisons Service spokesman Sergei Tsygankov told Interfax.

The fugitive was wearing a black inmate uniform at the time of his escape, the report said.

Topalov was held in a cell together with seven other inmates, who were being questioned in connection with the breakout.

Tsygankov added that Topalov had a mental disorder and was prone to making escape attempts.

Moscow police have been mobilized for an all-out search for the fugitive and an internal investigation of the incident has been opened.

It was the first escape from a detention center in Moscow in 12 years, Interfax said. The police have a good record at recapturing escapees. Reputed hit man Alexander Solonik, the only man ever to escape from Matrosskaya Tishina and remain at large, managed to flee to Greece after the jailbreak in 1995. But his body was found on Feb. 2, 1997, about 20 kilometers north of Athens. He had been strangled and wrapped in plastic bags.

The main building of Matrosskaya Tishina, which means Sailor's Rest, was built in 1918 and over the years has held notable prisoners such as former oil tycoon Mikhail Khodorkovsky.

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