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Russian Drug Smuggler Yaroshenko Being Harrassed in U.S. Prison, Lawyer Says

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Konstantin Yaroshenko was detained by U.S. law enforcement officers in Liberia four years ago.

The lawyer of Russian pilot and U.S. convict Konstantin Yaroshenko has accused prison authorities of using "psychological intimidation" tactics against his client after he was held in an isolation cell for hours, news reports said.

Yaroshenko was put into isolation for four hours and questioned after a fellow inmate at the Fort Dix federal prison, New Jersey, reportedly accused the pilot of threatening him, lawyer Alexei Tarasov said, Itar-Tass reported Friday.

"The pilot is very upset," Tarasov said, adding the phone conversation with his client had been limited to one minute. "He only had time to tell me he was being harassed again."

Tarasov said Yaroshenko did not know who had filed the harassment complaint against him and that it clearly was a false accusation.

"It is utter nonsense, the seriously ill Russian is not in a condition to commit any aggressive act," Tarasov was quoted as saying by Itar-Tass.

The Russian Foreign Ministry would be seeking clarification of the incident from U.S. authorities, the ministry's human rights commissioner, Konstantin Dolgov, said.

"If these facts are true, if he was thrown into solitary confinement, these actions cannot be justified," Dolgov said in comments carried by Itar-Tass.

Yaroshenko was detained by U.S. law enforcement officers in Liberia four years ago, and was sentenced to 20 years in prison for attempting to smuggle cocaine into the U.S. in September 2011.

Russian authorities have repeatedly condemned Yaroshenko's incarceration, and demanded diplomatic and medical access to the prisoner, whose health, his lawyer says, has been worsening.

In a travel warning issued in April, the Russian Foreign Ministry accused the U.S. of making "routine practice out of a 'hunt' for Russian citizens in third countries" and cited Yaroshenko's case as an example of Russians who have been "effectively kidnapped and transported to the U.S." to face trial and conviction.

See also:

Foreign Ministry Warns Against U.S. Hunt for Russian Citizens

Russian Convicted of Drug Smuggling in U.S. Asks Putin Help With Transfer

Russia Demands Access to Russian Drug Smuggler in U.S. Jail.

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