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Russian Mom Faces Treason Charges for Call to Ukrainian Embassy

By Allison Quinn

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The woman put in a call to Ukrainian diplomats to warn them Russian troops may be traveling to their country.

A Smolensk woman faces charges of high treason after she phoned Ukrainian diplomats to warn them that Russian troops may be en route to their country, newspaper Kommersant reported Thursday.

The woman, identified in the report as a mother of seven named Svetlana Davydova, is currently being held in Moscow's Lefortovo pre-trial detention facility after a court issued an arrest warrant last week, according to the report.

The alleged crime occurred last April, when Davydova contacted the Ukrainian Embassy in Moscow and told them that a military base near her home had been virtually emptied after the troops were sent somewhere, her husband, Anatoly Gorlov, was cited as saying by Kommersant.

According to Gorlov, she had also overheard a Russian soldier from the local military base telling someone by phone on a bus that he was being sent on a mission. Fearing that Russian soldiers were being deployed to eastern Ukraine, she informed the Ukrainian Embassy of what she had heard.

Months later, on Jan. 21, investigators from the Federal Security Service, or FSB, showed up at her home, conducted a raid and took her into custody, Gorlov said in comments carried by Kommersant.

"Svetlana [Davydova] called the Ukrainians and told them that she had such information and wanted to prevent there from being any possible victims," Gorlov was cited as saying. "Svetlana is against this war, but I wouldn't say that we are active anti-war protesters or opposition activists. She used to be a member of the Communist Party, but then left to raise the kids. I don't understand how the Federal Security Service learned of all this."

Speculation about Russian troops in Ukraine has run rife since the annexation of Crimea in March. Russia's Defense Ministry has repeatedly denied that any Russian soldiers have been sent there, with officials maintaining that any who are there went voluntarily. NATO and Kiev have both made claims to the contrary.

It was unclear when Davydova's trial is set to take place. The FSB answered Kommersant's request for information by saying they'd respond within a month.

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