

Russian Officials Say Debtor Had Sex Change to Avoid Paying Up

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A transgender Russian man accused of evading a court-imposed fine after undergoing a female-to-male sex change has been tracked down after months on the run, bailiffs said in a statement.

Bailiffs in the southern Astrakhan region had been searching since last year for a local woman who was found guilty of assault and fined 70,000 rubles (\$1,218), which she had yet to pay off, the Federal Bailiffs Service said Tuesday in a statement.

Instead, they found the convict — who had changed her gender and her passport details — living as a man in the Moscow region, the statement said.

“The fugitive was officially married and had started living in the Moscow region, confident of his continued success in evading the payment of his debt,” the statement said, “But his sophisticated plans were not destined to work out.”

The suspect, who now goes by the name Adrian, has since paid off part of his fine, the statement said.

Despite a recent law banning the promotion of same-sex relations to minors, sex reassignment is still legal in Russia — where it was reportedly first performed decades ago, according to state-run news outlet Russia Beyond the Headlines.

However, obtaining a sex reassignment is a complicated process, requiring a lengthy evaluation by psychiatrists who must declare the person to be suffering from “transsexualism” before the procedure is approved, according to medical site Lecheniye Za Rubezhom (Treatment Abroad).

A bill currently working its way through Russia's parliament would seek to ban transgender people from getting married.

The bill, introduced by Alexei Zhuravlyov, a lawmaker from the ruling United Russia party, argues that allowing transgender people to marry “contradicts society's views on traditional family culture and morals, and causes public disapproval,” according to an explanatory note posted on the legislature's website.

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