

Septuagenarian Russian Academic Accused of State Treason

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Bauman Moscow State Technical University

A 74-year-old Russian academic has been placed under house arrest on suspicion of committing state treason, the Interfax news agency reported Tuesday.

Vladimir Lapygin, an employee of the Central Research Institute of Machine Building (TsNIIImash), is accused of passing secret information abroad, Interfax cited an unnamed source with knowledge of the case as saying.

The report did not specify what kind of information Lapygin is alleged to have shared.

The source said Lapygin had worked for many years at TsNIIImash, which is the main institute of Roscosmos, the federal space agency. He had also worked as a professor at the prestigious Bauman Moscow State Technical University, the report said.

Lapygin has been ordered to remain under house arrest until mid-September, Interfax cited

the Lefortovo court spokeswoman as saying. She confirmed that he is accused of state treason and added that his case is classified as secret.

Lapygin's is the latest in a series of cases in which Russians have been accused of state treason and espionage, including a former nuclear scientist charged with divulging state secrets in an article published in a Czech academic journal and a Navy serviceman accused of working for foreign intelligence while serving on a Black Sea tanker.

In another high-profile case, a mother of seven from Smolensk was charged with high treason for phoning the Ukrainian Embassy to warn them about the possible transport of Russian troops toward eastern Ukraine. The charges against her were eventually dropped amid a public outcry, and she later received an official apology from prosecutors.

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