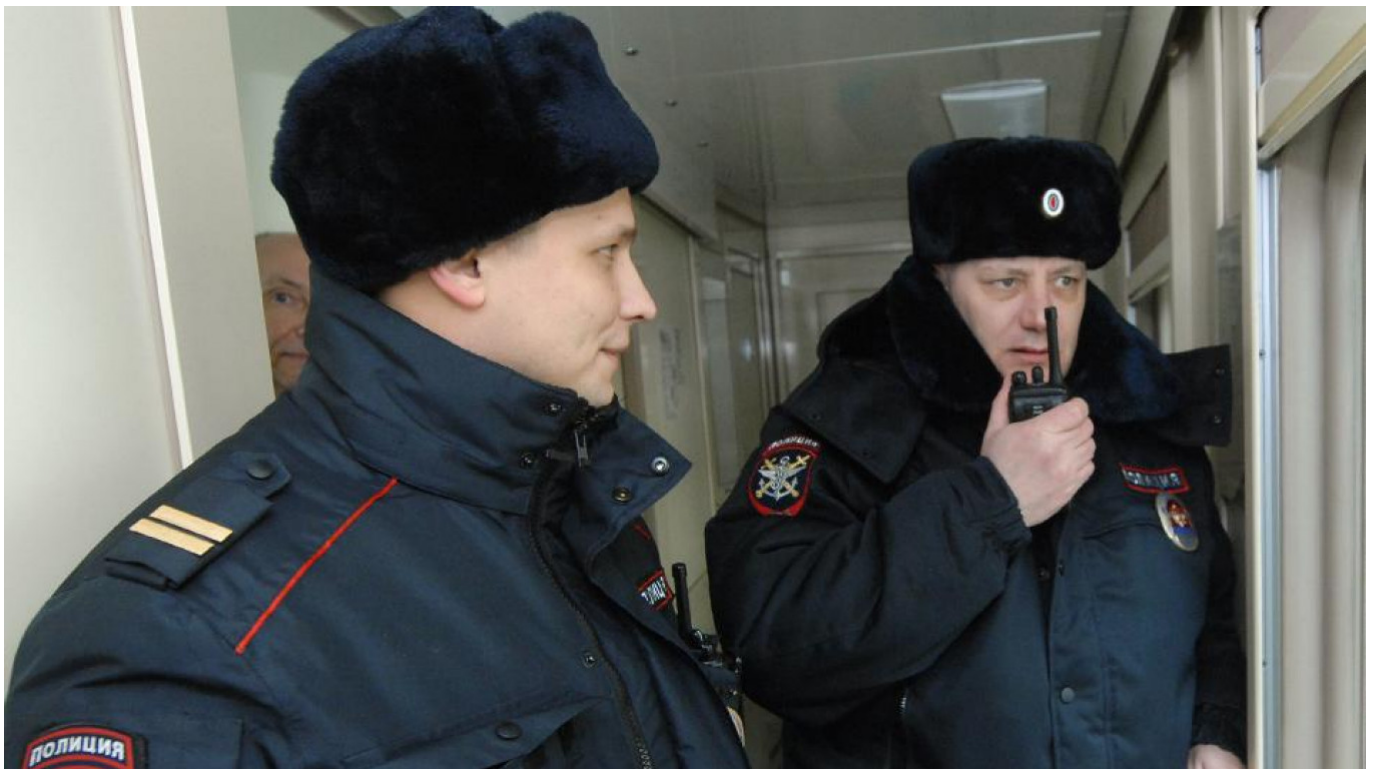


Russian Police Bust Nationwide Online Drug Ring

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Sergei Kiselyov / Moskva News Agency

Russian police have busted a synthetic drug smuggling ring that operated through an online store and accepted cryptocurrency.

The Russian government has [struggled](#) to clamp down on synthetic drugs for years as dealers find new compounds to avoid using banned substances.

Twenty-seven people were arrested and 345 kilograms of synthetic drugs confiscated alongside 500 kilograms of reagents in a nationwide bust, Russia's Interior Ministry [said](#) in a statement on Tuesday.

"Police identified and dismantled four drug labs, which produced from 20 to 100 kilograms of synthetic drugs per week," ministry spokeswoman Irina Volk said in the online statement.

The 27 suspects, who allegedly recruited members through job placement ads seeking pawnbrokers and couriers, face 19 criminal charges.

In another high-profile case this week, police in Argentina arrested six people suspected of running a cocaine smuggling ring between the Russian Embassy in Buenos Aires and Moscow earlier this month.

The Russian Office of Presidential Affairs [denied](#) accusations on Tuesday that a presidential airliner was used to smuggle the cocaine after a plane seen in video footage was identified as being part of Russia's presidential fleet.

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