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Norway Extends Detention of Russian Suspected of Spying

By Reuters

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EPA\TASS

A court in Norway extended the detention of a Russian citizen suspected of spying at the Norwegian parliament for another two weeks on Thursday, despite Moscow's protests, his lawyer said.

The Russian foreign ministry has demanded that Norway lifts "the absurd charges" and releases Mikhail Bochkaryov, whom it identified as a staff member of the Russian parliament's upperhouse.

"My client disagrees with the decision, and has already appealed it to the higher court," his Norwegian lawyer, Hege Aakre, told Reuters.

The Oslo District Court has not yet confirmed the extension in its official communications.

Bochkaryov was detained on Sept. 21 at the Oslo airport before a flight out of the country after

attending a seminar on digitalization at Norway's parliament, Stortinget.

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The Norwegian police security service, the PST, asked the court to extend the detention, arguing that he might destroy evidence or leave the country, if freed.

The PST was not immediately available for comment.

Aakre said she expected the Borgarting Court of Appeals to hold a hearing on the grounds for continued detention on Friday or Monday at the latest.

The appeals court last week upheld the decision to detain Bochkaryov for an initial two weeks period, citing evidence that he had collected information from computer and wireless networks at the parliament.

"It is not probable that the suspect acted alone," it added.

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