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Russia to Deport Togolese National Facing Death Penalty at Home

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A former presidential guard from the West African nation of Togo who faces the death penalty for helping his country's opposition will be deported from Russia, Moscow-based activists have said.

Russia has for the past five years denied refugee status to Bozobeyidou Batoma, 42, a former member of the Togolese commando guard force, Russia's Civic Assistance Committee said. A Russian court ruled last month to deport Batoma back to Togo, which he had escaped after allegedly being imprisoned and tortured and where he faced the threat of extrajudicial execution.

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He could be sent back to Togo on a Monday morning flight via Casablanca, Morocco, the Civic Assistance Committee, a primary point of contact for refugees in Russia, wrote on Facebook

Sunday.

The NGO said it appealed the court's decision last week and a new court date has been set for July 22, but police in the Bryansk region near the Belarussian border had reportedly taken him to Moscow ahead of his deportation.

"Bozobeyidou Batoma can't be put on a plane and forced to return to Togo, death awaits him there!" the activists warned.

The UN refugee agency, UNHCR, in 2018 had recognized Batoma as a person in need of international protection, the Civic Assistance Committee added.

Russia has called the charges against him in Togo "speculation" when denying him asylum, the MBKh Media news website cited authorities as saying.

A flight had departed toward Casablanca from Domodedovo Airport earlier on Monday and is scheduled to arrive in Lome, Togo, early Tuesday.

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