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Latvia Arrests Spy Working for Russia

By AFP

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The suspect is accused of trying to recruit a secret service officer to spy for Moscow. **jbdodane / Flickr (CC BY-NC 2.0)**

Latvia said Monday a citizen thought to be working for Russia has been arrested for trying to recruit a secret service officer to spy for Moscow.

"The agent... contacted the Latvian officer to try to recruit him into handing over classified material that could then be used by Russia's secret services against Latvia but the agent has been arrested instead," Latvia's security service said in a statement.

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The man, whose name was not disclosed, contacted the officer in July and was arrested in November. He faces up to 10 years in jail if convicted.

Contacted by AFP, the Russian Embassy in Latvia declined comment. Moscow regularly rejects

such charges.

Russian espionage activity in Latvia — and its fellow Baltic states Estonia and Lithuania — has increased since Moscow annexed Crimea in 2014 and tensions with the West have grown over its backing for rebels in eastern Ukraine.

In 2018, Jurijs Stilve was found guilty of spying for Russia and got three years on probation, while railroad maintenance dispatcher Aleksandrs Krasnopjorovs was jailed for over three years for forwarding NATO video surveillance footage to Russia.

Olegs Buraks, a former Latvian police and interior ministry officer, is currently awaiting trial on suspicion of having spied for Moscow.

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