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Russian Prisoner in U.S. Yaroshenko Tested After Cellmate's Coronavirus Death

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Konstantin Yaroshenko is serving a 20-year sentence at the Danbury federal prison in Connecticut for conspiracy to smuggle cocaine into the United States. **Valery Matytsin / TASS**

U.S. prison officials have sent Russian pilot Konstantin Yaroshenko into observation after his cellmate allegedly died from coronavirus, Russia's Consulate in New York said Thursday.

Yaroshenko is serving a 20-year sentence at the Danbury federal prison in Connecticut for conspiracy to smuggle cocaine into the United States. Russia's consulate said it filed a health request with the prison following reports of the coronavirus' spread across the state.

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"The prison administration responded that [Yaroshenko] was sent for a medical exam," the Russian consulate said on Facebook.

“We expect it to be done immediately and that Yaroshenko will be provided all the needed medical care,” it said.

Russia has long been lobbying for the U.S. to release or exchange Yaroshenko.

One of Yaroshenko’s cellmates had died from complications related to Covid-19, fueling “panic” at the prison, the Russian pilot’s lawyer told the state-run TASS news agency Monday.

“[Yaroshenko himself] is suffering all coronavirus symptoms,” the attorney, Alexei Tarasov, was quoted as saying.

At least one inmate has died at Danbury prison, which according to the U.S. Bureau of Prisons has 44 coronavirus cases among both staff and inmates.

Connecticut has the 10th-most coronavirus cases in the U.S., with 22,469 out of 842,621 confirmed infections.

Russia has officially confirmed 62,773 coronavirus cases and 555 deaths as of Thursday.

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