

# Kremlin Walks Back Putin Claims on Jailed Ex-Journalist's Treason Charges

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Former defense reporter Ivan Safronov faces up to 20 years in prison on suspicion of passing state secrets to the Czech Republic in 2017. **Sophia Sandurskaya / Moskva News Agency**

President Vladimir Putin misspoke Thursday by asserting that treason charges against former journalist Ivan Safronov relate to his short-lived career at Russia's state space agency Roscosmos this year.

Putin, speaking to the presidential human rights council, [claimed](#) that Safronov is being prosecuted for passing secrets to the European special services while at Roscosmos and not during his long career as a defense reporter at leading Russian newspapers.

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Safronov faces up to 20 years in prison on suspicion of passing state secrets to the Czech Republic in 2017. Authorities detained him in July this year, two months after he was appointed as an adviser to Roscosmos chief Dmitry Rogozin.

Roscosmos issued a denial immediately after, maintaining that the treason charges against Safronov date back to 2017, whereas the space agency appointed him in 2020.

“He misspoke,” Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov [told](#) the state-run RIA Novosti news agency following Putin’s comments.

At the human rights meeting, Putin also called the recent string of treason charges against Russian nationals for disclosing information their defense attorneys claim to be publicly available “complete nonsense.”

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