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Bali Police Hunt Russian Wanted by Interpol

By AFP

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Indonesian police declined to specify what crime Kovalenko committed overseas. **Made Nagi / EPA / TASS**

Indonesian police are on the hunt in Bali for a Russian fugitive wanted by Interpol after he escaped from custody while waiting to be deported from the resort island, authorities said Monday.

CCTV footage released by the authorities showed Andrei Kovalenko sneaking out of the immigration office in Denpasar detention center on Thursday while officials were busy finishing his transfer paperwork and running outside.

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Police said Kovalenko was wanted by Interpol but declined to specify what crime he

committed overseas.

"We are still investigating this case and we have deployed all our resources" to search for him, Bali police's head of general crimes, Djuhandani Rahardjo Puro told a press conference Monday.

Immigration officials immediately alerted the police and the Russian Embassy to search for Kovalenko, who has also used Andrew Ayer as a name.

The Russian Embassy, contacted by AFP, declined to comment on the case.

The 32-year-old Russian was arrested in a cafe in the popular tourist hub Kuta in 2019 for selling hashish to fellow tourists. He was sentenced to 18 months in prison and was released on Feb. 3.

On his way out of Kerobokan prison, he was handed over to immigration officials while waiting to be deported.

Police said Kovalenko escaped after he received a visit from a Russian female friend identified as Ekaterina Trubkina, now also wanted for allegedly assisting him.

Indonesian authorities have previously caught international fugitives wanted by Interpol who sought to hide in the palm-fringed island of Bali.

In July last year, Bali police arrested Marcus Beam, an American fugitive accused of scamming $500,000 from women he met online between 2015 to 2019.

The American had been hiding in Bali with his girlfriend where he worked as a porn actor-director.

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