Russian Imprisoned for Handing 'State Secrets' to China

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Russian authorities have stepped up arrests of citizens, including scientists and journalists, on charges of sharing sensitive information with foreigners in recent years. **Roman Balandin / TASS**

A Russian national has been sentenced to 8 years in prison for treason by handing state secrets to China, a court in Siberia [announced](#) Thursday.

Vladimir Vasilyev, 52, had pleaded guilty to passing state secrets to China's intelligence services, the state-run TASS news agency [quoted](#) an unnamed law enforcement source as saying. He is at least the [third](#) Russian citizen to be convicted of state treason this year and the 10th in the past two years.

The Zabaikalsky region court in a closed-door trial found Vasilyev guilty of high treason and sentenced him to 8 years in a maximum-security penal colony.

The court's press service added in an online statement that it imposed an additional year of restrictions on Vasilyev after he serves his jail term.

The court service confirmed that the sentence has come into force, according to TASS. It was unclear if Vasilyev's defense team planned to appeal the ruling.

State treason convictions in Russia have [increased](#) significantly since 2014 after a total of 25 Russians were sentenced in 2009–2013, according to Supreme Court data. In 2020 alone, Russian investigators opened around 30 state treason cases.

Critics have accused Russian authorities of paranoia as it has stepped up arrests of citizens, including scientists and journalists, on charges of sharing sensitive information with foreigners.

Despite the arrests, Russia has prioritized closer ties with China in the wake of deteriorating relations with the West following the 2014 annexation of Crimea.

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