

Leading Russian Physicist Charged With Treason Dies of Cancer

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Viktor Kudryavtsev was among a growing number of Russian scientists and journalists accused of sharing sensitive information with foreigners. **Anton Novoderezhkin / TASS**

A prominent Russian scientist accused of state treason has died from cancer at age 77, his lawyer and the RBC news website [reported](#) Thursday.

Viktor Kudryavtsev was charged in 2018 in connection with a suspected leak of hypersonic missile secrets to Belgium. He was later released after over a year in pre-trial detention after he was diagnosed with late-stage lung cancer.

Related article: [Russian Scientist Charged With Treason After Missile Technology Leak](#)

According to RBC, one of the pieces of evidence against the physicist was a fake U.S. “green card” permanent resident approval email found in Kudryavtsev’s spam folder.

He was among a growing number of prominent scientists, journalists and regular civilians

who have been accused of sharing sensitive information with foreigners in recent years. Russia has stepped up treason convictions since its relations with the West deteriorated over the annexation of Crimea from Ukraine in 2014.

Kudryavtsev died from complications linked to his cancer treatment, RBC cited his lawyer Ivan Pavlov as saying.

“A year and two months in [prison] on an absurd charge completely weakened his health,” Pavlov [wrote](#) in a Facebook post.

“Kudryavtsev’s case is an example of how the special services are killing Russian science, in the truest sense of the word,” he continued.

Kudryavtsev won a state award for his research into gas and liquid dynamics, the BBC [reported](#). Russia’s Memorial human rights group declared Kudryavtsev a [political prisoner](#).

Russia’s Federal Security Service (FSB) said in 2020 that investigators had [halted](#) the preliminary investigation into Kudryavtsev’s treason case, where he faced up to 20 years behind bars, pending his recovery.

Pavlov’s colleagues said early Friday that authorities [detained](#) the lawyer in connection with “disclosing details of a preliminary investigation,” a crime punishable by three months in jail or having one’s legal license revoked.

It was not immediately clear if his detention was linked to news of Kudryavtsev’s passing.

Pavlov also represents jailed Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny’s team in an “extremism” case that could ban all its activities in Russia as well as ex-journalist Ivan Safronov who is also jailed on treason charges.

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