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Prominent Russian Lawyer Detained for 'Sharing Investigative Details'

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Ivan Pavlov represents jailed ex-journalist Ivan Safronov as well as jailed Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny's team. **Mikhail Japaridze / TASS**

One of Russia's leading defense lawyers has been detained on criminal charges of disclosing details of an investigation hours before he was due in court to represent a prominent former journalist accused of treason, his colleagues said early Friday.

"Ivan Pavlov, the leader of Team 29, was arrested on April 30 in Moscow after a search in his hotel room," the organization said on its website.

Related article: Russia Detains Ex-Defense Reporter for Treason

Team 29 describes itself as an association of lawyers and journalists that stands for Russian citizens' rights to access and distribute information.

"Mr. Pavlov was getting ready for a 9 a.m. court hearing for his defendant, journalist Ivan

Safronov, accused of treason," Team 29 said in the statement. The Moscow court extended Safronov's pre-trial detention later Friday.

Pavlov told the independent Dozhd broadcaster that investigators suspect him of sharing information from Safronov's treason case. Safronov faces up to 20 years in prison on suspicion of passing state secrets to the Czech Republic as a defense reporter in 2017.

Team 29 added that authorities also broke down the St. Petersburg apartment door of its digital security officer, Igor Dorfman, who stopped responding to calls at around that time. It later reported that police raided its office in St. Petersburg and the home of Pavlov's wife.

Pavlov faces up to three months of arrest or two years of community service if found guilty of "disclosing the data of a preliminary investigation."

Pavlov also represents jailed Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny's team in a highly anticipated "extremism" case that could see all its activities in Russia banned.

Pavlov's colleague Olga Tseytlina told BBC Russia that she believes he was detained — the first such charges against lawyers since 2013 — in connection with the Navalny case to "push him aside."

"This is an act of intimidation for the entire legal community, a signal that we're all under the sword of Damocles: If you open your mouth, there will be fallout," she said.

Pavlov's other colleague, Yevgeny Smirnov, said that a lead investigator in Safronov's treason case had threatened to "do everything to jail you because you are bones in our throats."

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