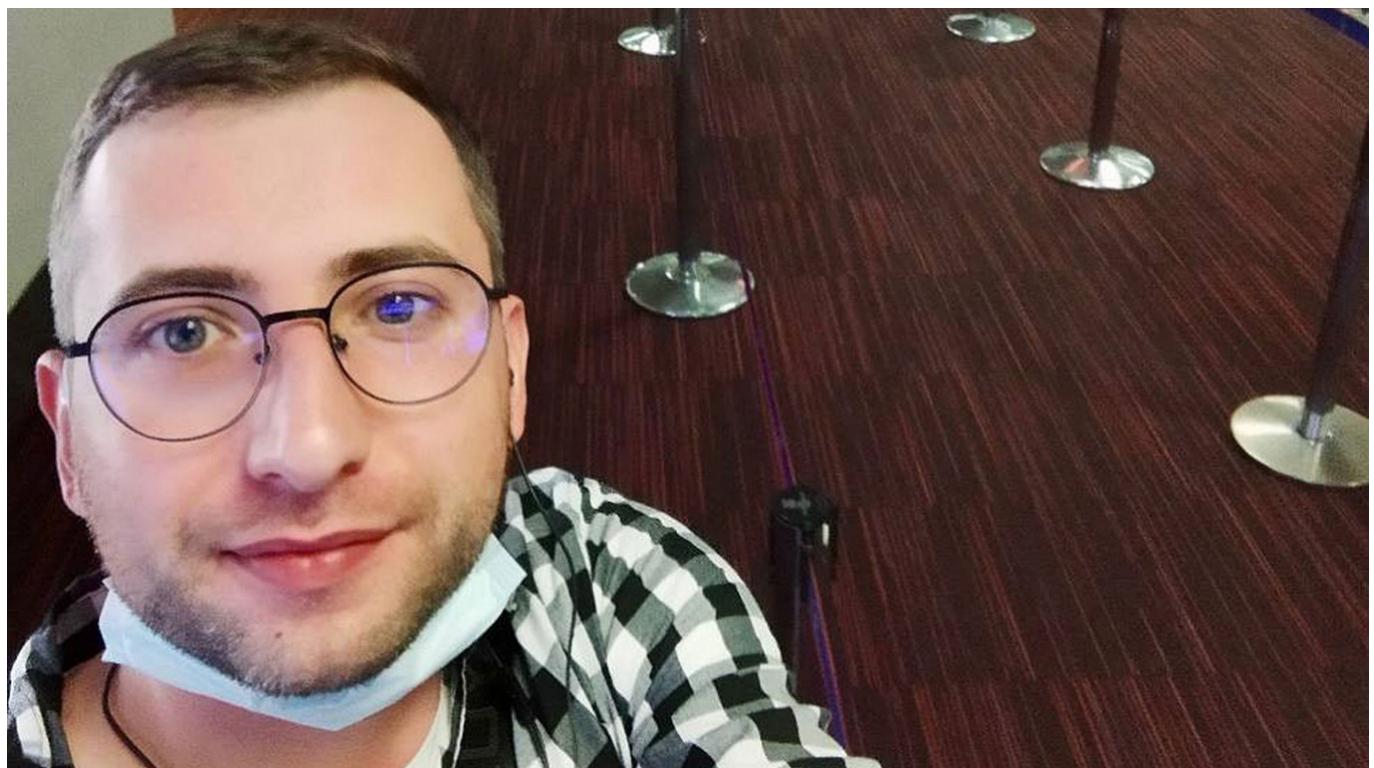


Russian Prison Torture Whistleblower Seeks Asylum in France

October 18, 2021



A leak of more than 100 gigabytes of video footage depicting alleged torture in Russian prisons has sparked outrage. [Gulagu.net](#)

A former inmate who leaked videos depicting alleged torture inside Russian prisons is seeking asylum in France, a prominent NGO that tracks abuses in Russia's prison system [said](#) over the weekend.

The Gulagu.net rights group said its source behind the leak of more than 100 gigabytes of files documenting widespread torture and rape of inmates by guards, identified as "Sergei," would face serious threats to his safety if forced to return to Russia or Belarus.

The series of [widely publicized](#) leaks prompted investigators to launch criminal cases into the allegations and resulted in Russia's prison service firing several officers.

"We officially confirm that Sergei, who requested political asylum on Oct. 16 at Paris airport is our source and the main whistleblower of this inhuman torture," Gulagu.net [said](#) on its Telegram channel.

“He faces real danger if he ends up in Russia or Belarus, where the KGB and FSB [security services] will arrest and kill him, staging an accident or alleged suicide,” it added.

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Gulagu.net said it had helped Sergei leave Russia and Belarus, despite security agencies’ efforts to “stop him and retrieve the secret video archive.”

The rights group said Sergei was an inmate at a notorious prison hospital in the central Russian city of Saratov, where the alleged torture took place.

“The young Belarusian was himself subjected to FSB torture, press-huts [special cells where beatings occur] and overcrowded jail cells,” Gulagu.net said.

“He risked his life to save others by sharing the secret video archive.”

The independent Novaya Gazeta [newspaper has identified](#) Sergei as a Belarusian IT expert.

“The several weeks of moving, changing addresses, avoiding the pursuit of SVR [foreign intelligence service] and FSB spies are now behind us,” Gulagu.net said, announcing Sergei had [arrived](#) in Paris from an unnamed North African country.

Quoting Gulagu.net founder Vladimir Osechkin, who is based in France, AFP [reported](#) Saturday that Sergei had been released from Russian prison in February.

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