

Russian Cybersecurity Entrepreneur Detained for Treason Claims Innocence

Group-IB founder Ilya Sachkov said he is “neither a traitor nor a spy,” in a letter to Vladimir Putin.

By [Adrien Henni](#)

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Ilya Sachkov [Andrey Lyubimov / RBC / TASS](#)

Top cybersecurity entrepreneur Ilya Sachkov, who was [arrested under charges of “state treason”](#) in late September, has claimed he is innocent and asked Russian President Vladimir Putin to transfer him from jail to house arrest during the investigation.

“I am neither a traitor nor a spy,” Sachkov wrote in a letter to Putin, penned from jail. “I am a Russian engineer. Through my work, I repeatedly proved my loyalty to the Motherland. I ask my president, Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin, to allow me to be put under house arrest with maximum restrictions during the period of the investigation.”

Excerpts of the letter were [shared with Forbes Russia](#) by Sachkov's lawyer Sergey Afanasyev.

Sachkov founded Group-IB, one of Russia's most successful cybersecurity firms, in 2003. He could face up to 20 years in prison under the charges [brought](#) against him.

Related article: [Russia Arrests Founder of Cybersecurity Company for Treason](#)

Group-IB's clients include Russia's biggest banks and telecom providers such as Sberbank, Alfa Bank, Megafon, MTS and Rostech. The company has also worked with Interpol and Russian law enforcement agencies.

Few details about treason cases in Russia are typically shared publicly by either prosecutors or defendants. Court cases involving treason charges are typically classified, with hearings taking place behind closed doors. Information can be withheld from defendants on security grounds and defense lawyers involved in cases can be [prohibited](#) from sharing information.

“I think this is a new Dreyfus affair,” Sachkov added, referring to a political scandal that divided France in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Falsely accused of being a German Spy, Captain Alfred Dreyfus was recognized innocent only after a 12-year legal saga.

Sachkov's mother also wrote a letter to Putin last month, asking the Russian President to “honestly investigate the case” and release her son.

While stating that the President is the “guarantor of citizens' rights and freedoms,” the [Russian constitution](#) does not grant Putin any specific powers to directly intervene in legal matters.

Sachkov, who is currently being held in the Lefortovo pre-trial detention center, is in good health, lawyer Afanasyev said. He has started receiving and responding to letters he said, implying some of the [strict restrictions](#) placed on Sachkov's activities following his arrest have been lifted.

On Tuesday, Moscow's Lefortovsky Court [extended](#) Sachkov's jail term for another three months, until Feb. 28, 2022, while the investigation continues.

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