Russia Arrests Alleged Co-Founder of World's Largest Darknet Marketplace

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Anete Lusina / pexels

Russia has arrested the alleged co-founder of dark web platform Hydra a week after U.S. and German authorities said they shut down what they called the world's largest illegal darknet marketplace.

German police said this month it took control of Hydra's Germany-based servers and seized $25 million in bitcoin assets. The U.S. Justice named Dmitry Pavlov, 30, as the administrator of Hydra's servers in its criminal charges.

Pavlov had said he was unaware of the charges and maintained his innocence.

"We are a hosting company and have all the necessary communications licenses. We don't administer any sites but only provide servers for rent as intermediaries," he told the BBC's Russian service last week.

Moscow's Meshchansky District Court ruled to detain D. Pavlov ahead of trial on charges of

large–scale drug trafficking, according to the court's database.

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The ruling is dated Monday, April 11. A court spokeswoman [identified](#) the suspect as Dmitry Olegovich Pavlov, an exact name match with the U.S. Justice Department indictment, to Russian media.

If found guilty, Pavlov faces between 15 and 20 years in prison.

He is unlikely to be extradited to the United States because the countries do not have an extradition treaty.

Hydra had enabled the sale of illegal drugs, stolen credit card data, counterfeit currency and fake identity documents through the Tor encryption network since its founding in 2015.

The German and U.S. investigations into Hydra started in August 2021.

Cybersecurity experts told The Moscow Times that Russia has also been investigating Hydra since its foundation. They speculated that Hydra could come back online despite the announced shutdown.

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