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NHL 'Draft Dodger' Fedotov Detained, Sent to Arctic – Reports

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Russia's goaltender Ivan Fedotov before the start of a 2021 Channel One Cup ice hockey match between the national teams of Russia and Sweden **Valery Sharifulin/TASS**

NHL-bound goaltender Ivan Fedotov was detained in Russia for dodging the draft and sent to serve in the Arctic, state media reported Sunday.

Fedotov, 25, was detained Friday in St. Petersburg at the request of the military prosecutor's office, according to the city's Fontanka.ru news website.

He was reportedly hospitalized after falling ill with what his lawyer called stress-induced gastritis.

"Ivan was allegedly sent from the hospital to Severomorsk at night," lawyer Alexei Ponomaryov told the sports.ru website early Sunday.

The closed town of Severomorsk, population 50,000, is located on the Kola Peninsula in the Arctic Circle and is the administrative base of the Russian Navy's Northern Fleet.

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“Ivan Fedotov is already in Severomorsk for military service,” the state-run TASS news agency quoted an unnamed security source as saying later that day.

“His presumed location for deployment will be one of the military units on Novaya Zemlya [archipelago] in the Arctic Ocean,” they added.

The Kremlin, which sent troops into Ukraine in February, brushed aside concern for Fedotov in and outside Russia.

"In our law there is military duty. So any emotional comments on this are absolutely inappropriate," spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Monday.

Fedotov signed an entry-level contract with the Philadelphia Flyers in May after being selected in the 2015 Entry Draft.

His contract with CSKA, the Central Sport Club of the Army, is believed to have ended on April 30.

The Russia-based Continental Hockey League (KHL) appeared to have scrubbed the date of Fedotov’s contract from its website, which is still accessible in the archived version.

CSKA’s spokesman told Reuters on Friday that Fedotov was “not bound by contractual obligations with our club.”

Fedotov led CSKA Moscow to the KHL’s championship title last season and Russia’s 2022 Olympic team to a silver medal at the Beijing Games.

“We’re aware of the reports [of Fedotov’s detention] and are investigating the situation,” Flyers general manager Chuck Fletcher said in a statement.

CSKA’s past affiliation with the Soviet Army meant that its players were considered military personnel subject to enlistment. Evasion of military service is also punishable by up to seven years in prison.

Military service is mandatory for men between the ages of 18 and 27 in Russia.

President Vladimir Putin, who sent troops into Ukraine in late February, ordered 134,5000 conscripts into the Armed Forces as part of the country's annual spring enlistment.

The U.S.-based National Hockey League cut ties with Russia over its invasion of Ukraine, though it has not banned several dozen Russian nationals from playing on its teams.

AFP contributed reporting.

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