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Russia Makes Latest Arrest for ‘Cooperating With Foreign State’

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Alexander Avilov / Moskva News Agency

Russia has handed down one of its first criminal cases on secretly working with a foreign government to undermine national security to a Moscow resident, Interfax reported Tuesday.

Lawmakers criminalized "confidential" cooperation with foreign individuals, states or organizations in June, as Russia’s invasion of Ukraine plunged the country into isolation and catalyzed a historic crackdown on dissent.

The article in Russia's Criminal Code does not specify which actions qualify as illegal cooperation with foreigners.

Related article: Russia Introduces Jail Terms for Cooperation With Foreigners

Moscow’s Lefortovo district court on Tuesday ordered a man identified as Pavel Andreevich Pischulin to two months of pre-trial arrest on the charges, Interfax cited the court press

service as saying.

If convicted, Pischulin faces up to eight years in prison and a fine.

Because the case is classified, the details of the defendant's alleged crime as well as his personal information were not disclosed.

The charges, which are not equivalent to espionage charges, carry echoes of the Soviet era, when contacts between Russians and foreigners were strictly monitored.

Jailed Russian opposition politician Vladimir Kara-Murza was handed the first known charges of collaborating with a foreign government earlier this month.

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