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Serbian Criminals Helped Son of Russian Governor Flee Italy Arrest – WSJ

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Artyom Uss **Social media**

A Kremlin-linked entrepreneur accused of smuggling U.S. military technology to Russia had fled house arrest in Italy with the help of a Serbian criminal gang, The Wall Street Journal reported Wednesday, citing unnamed sources familiar with the events.

Artyom Uss, 41, the son of the ex-governor of Siberia's Krasnoyarsk region, escaped in March the day after an Italian court approved his extradition to the United States. He faces up to 30 years in U.S. prison on charges including the illegal export of "powerful" U.S. military technology.

Italian media reported at the time that Uss may have been aided by the Russian security services. But WSJ reported that Italian authorities "would have known" about the direct involvement of Russian intelligence.

Instead, WSJ said that Uss, aided by "a gang of Serbian criminals," evaded Italian police by switching cars and crossing several borders before reaching Serbia.

He is believed to have flown to Moscow from Serbia.

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Uss is the seventh person wanted for extradition to the U.S. to escape house arrest in Italy in the last three years, according to WSJ.

The U.S. Justice Department's request to keep Uss in custody was reportedly ignored by the three Italian judges who had granted house arrest for the entrepreneur.

Although Uss wore an electronic ankle monitor under house arrest, Italian intelligence had not kept him under surveillance due to concerns of illegal interference in a court proceeding, according to WSJ.

Uss may have been aided by a "network of accomplices" connected to Russia's secret services, Italy's La Reppublica newspaper reported in late March.

Uss was one of five Russians detained at Washington's request at Milan's Malpensa Airport in October 2022.

The entrepreneur faces additional charges of sanctions violations and money laundering, which he denied and requested to be handed over to the Russian authorities under a criminal case that was closed immediately after his return.

Serbia has strong political, military and economic ties with Russia due to their shared Slavic and Orthodox Christian heritage and Moscow opposed the 2008 independence of Kosovo.

Belgrade has refused to join Western sanctions in retaliation to Russia's invasion of Ukraine despite its intention to join the European Union.

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