

West Rejects Russia's Extradition Requests Over 'Politics' – Reports

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A couple enters Red Square in central Moscow. **Natalia Kolesnikova / AFP**

Western law enforcement agencies have rejected Russian extradition and legal assistance requests for “political” reasons this year, the Kommersant business daily [reported](#) Thursday, as bilateral legal cooperation continues to deteriorate more than a year into Moscow’s invasion of Ukraine.

European countries rejected 46 Russian extradition requests in January–May 2023, the publication cited Russia’s General Prosecutor’s Office as saying.

Fifteen of the rejections by EU members including Austria, Italy, Germany and Poland cited political reasons.

According to Kommersant, courts in the EU countries refused to hand over suspects to Russia over concerns that their rights could be violated and that they could face “inhumane” conditions in Russian detention.

The suspects wanted by Russian authorities face charges of organized crime, terrorism, hostage-taking and manslaughter, as well as economic crimes, at home.

The number of rejected Russian extradition requests has [doubled](#) since Russia launched its “special military operation” in Ukraine in February 2022 in comparison to the pre-war period.

In 2023, Kommersant said Russia has managed to achieve the extradition of 48 defendants to face criminal prosecution in their home country in January–May.

Eleven of them were extradited from countries outside Moscow’s post-Soviet sphere of influence, which are broadly known as the “far abroad” and include the United States and European Union.

Kommersant also reported that U.S. and European courts rejected 27 Russian requests for legal assistance in January–May 2023.

Twenty-three rejections, with Switzerland accounting for 17 of them, cited “political motivations” for criminal prosecutions of the suspects in Russia.

Swiss justice officials, for example, said they had “the highest doubts about whether Russia will adhere to guarantees or other international legal obligations in connection with the provided legal assistance.”

Russia’s Prosecutor General’s Office called the rejections “a manifestation of Russophobia” and said they constitute a “win for international crime.”

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