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Latvia Jails Ex-Interior Minister for Pro-Russia Spying

By AFP

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Former Latvian interior minister Janis Adamsons. **Saeima (CC BY-SA 2.0)**

A Latvian court on Thursday jailed former interior minister Janis Adamsons and a Russian accomplice for spying for Russia's Federal Security Service (FSB).

The court in Riga sentenced Adamasons to eight-and-a-half years in prison and Russian citizen Gennady Silonov to seven years in prison.

"Adamsons collected secret and unclassified information for the Russian secret services, in an illegal, systematic and targeted way," Judge Erlens Ernstsons said.

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Adamsons, 67, was Latvia's interior minister in 1994-95, and he later went on to serve as a lawmaker for six parliament terms before his arrest in 2021.

He was also enlisted in the Soviet navy as a political officer in 1979-92 and signed up for the reconstituted Latvian navy upon his return to the country.

He became the navy's deputy chief and was interim head of a border force brigade.

"Adamsons was not interested in collaborating with the Russian secret services for money. More plausibly, he did so out of ideological convictions," a member of the prosecution team told LTV television.

Meanwhile, Silonov worked as a KGB officer in the 1980s and gathered information from Adamsons in around 40 meetings over four years, according to the news website Pietiek.com.

Silonov was a career officer within the Soviet intelligence agency until 1991, when Latvia declared its independence and outlawed the KGB.

Both defendants pleaded not guilty and intend to appeal the verdict.

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