In First, Russia Arrests South Korean National on Spying Charges

March 11, 2024

Andrei Lyubimov / Moskva News Agency

Russia authorities have arrested a citizen of South Korea on charges of spying, the state-run TASS news agency [reported](#) Monday, citing an anonymous law enforcement official.

"During operational search activities as part of an investigation into espionage, a citizen of the Republic of Korea, Baek Won Sung, was identified and detained," the unnamed law enforcement official was quoted as saying by TASS.

According to the outlet, Baek was detained in the Far East port city of Vladivostok earlier this year and then transferred to Moscow in late February.

He is currently being held in detention at Moscow's Lefortovo prison.

Related article: [Russia's Arrest of Evan Gershkovich Echoes Soviet Spy Scandal](#)

The anonymous law enforcement source told TASS that Baek is suspected of passing state

secrets to foreign intelligence services.

Charges of espionage are punishable by up to 20 years in prison.

Later on Monday, Moscow's Lefortovo Court [extended](#) Baek's detention for three months, until June 15.

According to TASS, the arrest of Baek on espionage charges marks the first case of its kind against a South Korean citizen in modern Russian history.

He is the second foreign national not from Ukraine to have been arrested on spy charges since Moscow launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

Last year, Russian authorities [arrested](#) Wall Street Journal reporter Evan Gershkovich on suspicion of spying, charges which he, his employer and the U.S. government deny.

Gershkovich is also being held in Moscow's Lefortovo prison.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2024/03/11/in-first-russia-arrests-south-korean-national-on-spying-charges-a84414