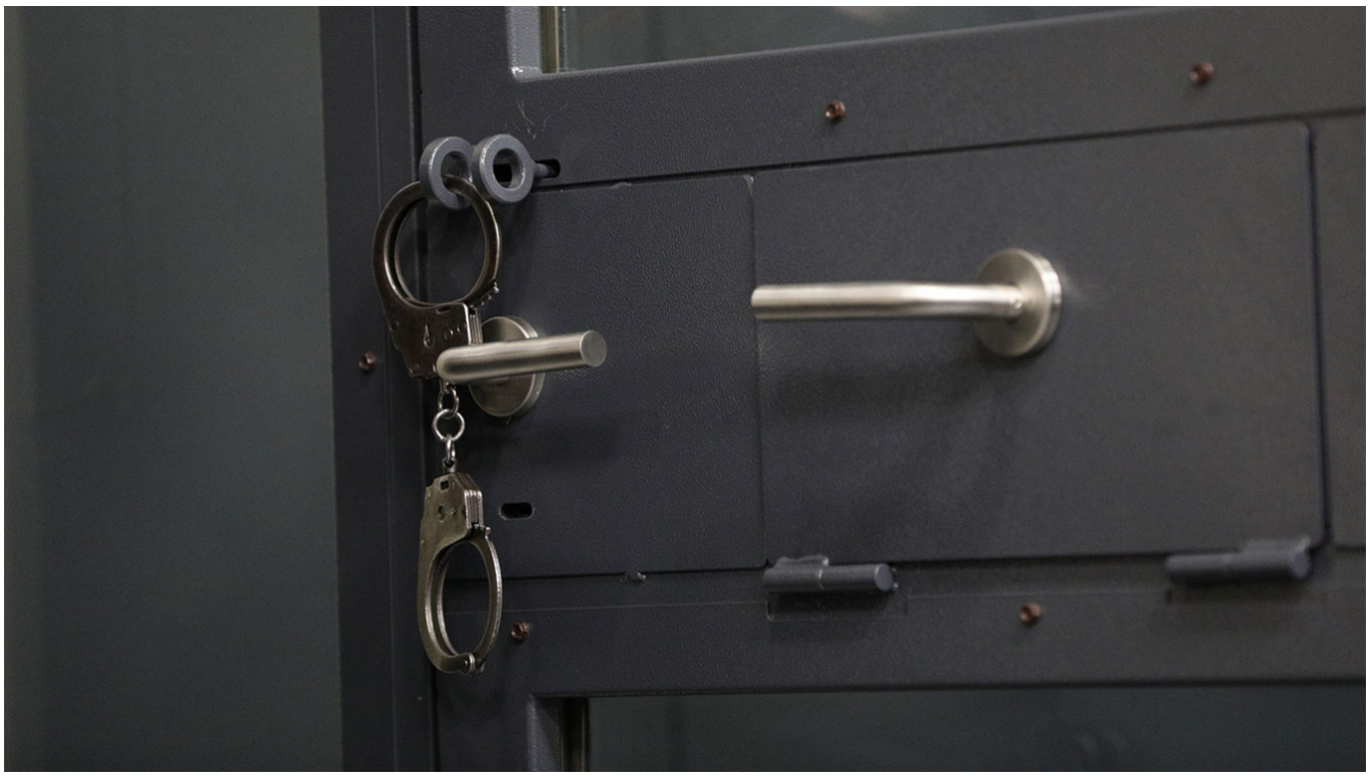
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Russia Jails 2 Men for Trying to Join Anti-Kremlin Militia

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Evgenij Razumnyj / Vedomosti / TASS

A Russian military court has sentenced two men to nine years in prison on separate charges of attempting to join a militia group fighting alongside the Ukrainian army, state media reported Wednesday.

Vsevolod Kulikov, 19, from the central Lipetsk region, and Vyacheslav Kuznetsov, 36, from the republic of Tatarstan, were accused of applying to enlist in the Freedom of Russia Legion last year. Their cases were not connected.

The Freedom of Russia Legion, which fights alongside Ukrainian forces, is primarily composed of Russian defectors and volunteers who seek to free Ukraine's territories from Russian occupation. Russia's Supreme Court in March 2023 designated the anti-Kremlin militia as a "terrorist organization."

Moscow's Second Western Military Garrison Court found Kuznetsov and Kulikov guilty of attempted state treason in separate trials and sentenced each of them to nine years in prison,

according to the TASS news agency.

Kulikov was also found guilty of attempted terrorism and forcing someone else to join the Ukrainian army. Kuznetsov was found guilty of attempting to join a terrorist organization.

While both men pleaded guilty, Kulikov later claimed he was tortured and that his confession had been forced.

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