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German Ex-Soldier Found Guilty of Spying for Moscow

By AFP

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The Russian embassy in Berlin, Germany. **Hannibal Hanschke / EPA / TASS**

A German ex-soldier was sentenced to three and a half years in prison on Monday for sharing secret military information with Russia following the outbreak of war in Ukraine.

A court in Duesseldorf found the defendant, identified only as Thomas H., guilty of passing information from his job at a military procurement office to the Russian government.

The 54-year-old pleaded guilty to the crime, claiming he was hoping to obtain information in return that would help him get his family to safety in the event of a nuclear war between Moscow and the West.

The espionage case is one of several uncovered in Germany since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

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Prosecutors had accused Thomas H. of photographing old training documents related to munitions systems and aircraft technology and dropping them into the postbox of the Russian consulate in Bonn.

The defendant "approached the Russian general consulate in Bonn and the Russian embassy in Berlin and offered his cooperation" in May 2023, prosecutors said. "He passed on information he had obtained in the course of his professional activities for it to be passed on to a Russian intelligence service."

Germany has been on high alert for Russian spies since the start of the war in Ukraine.

In April, investigators arrested two German-Russian men on suspicion of spying for Moscow and planning attacks in Germany to undermine military shipments to Kyiv.

A former German intelligence officer is currently on trial in Berlin, accused of handing information to Moscow that showed Germany had access to details of Russian mercenary operations in Ukraine.

And in November 2022, a German man was handed a suspended sentence for passing information to Russian intelligence while serving as an army reserve officer.

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