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Italy Arrests Man Suspected of Helping Son of Russian Ex-Governor Flee Country

By AFP

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Andrea Ferrario / unsplash

Italy on Friday arrested a Russian national suspected of helping the son of a former regional governor in Russia escape house arrest while awaiting extradition to the United States on charges of illegally exporting military technology.

The Russian national allegedly arranged for Artyom Uss — the son of ex-Krasnoyarsk region Governor Aleksandr Uss — to flee Italy in March 2023, the day after an Italian court ordered his extradition to the United States.

Uss was detained at Milan Malpensa airport in October 2022 after the U.S. issued a warrant for his arrest, with Washington accusing him of being involved in illegal schemes to export American military technology to Russia. The U.S. Justice Department said some of the equipment had been "discovered on the battlefields of Ukraine."

Despite wearing an electronic tracking bracelet, Uss went missing from his residence in Italy last year and several days later announced he was back in Russia.

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Milan public prosecutor's office said the Russian national arrested on Friday is suspected of having helped Uss flee Italy country by "contacting the members of the gang who subsequently carried out the escape."

Prosecutors said the 54-year-old, who is a Swiss resident and whose name they have not made public, was in constant contact with Uss's family "in order to control the organization and execution of the exfiltration."

Italian media identified the man as entrepreneur Dmitry Chirakadze, co-founder of the Pravo.ru group, which provides assistance to Russian court websites.

While not naming the suspect, the Milan public prosecutor's office described the man as an aristocrat descended from a grand duke of Georgia. He is also a shareholder in "numerous Russian companies with the involvement of members of the Uss family," it added.

The five men who carried out Uss' escape by car across the Balkans have all already been arrested.

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