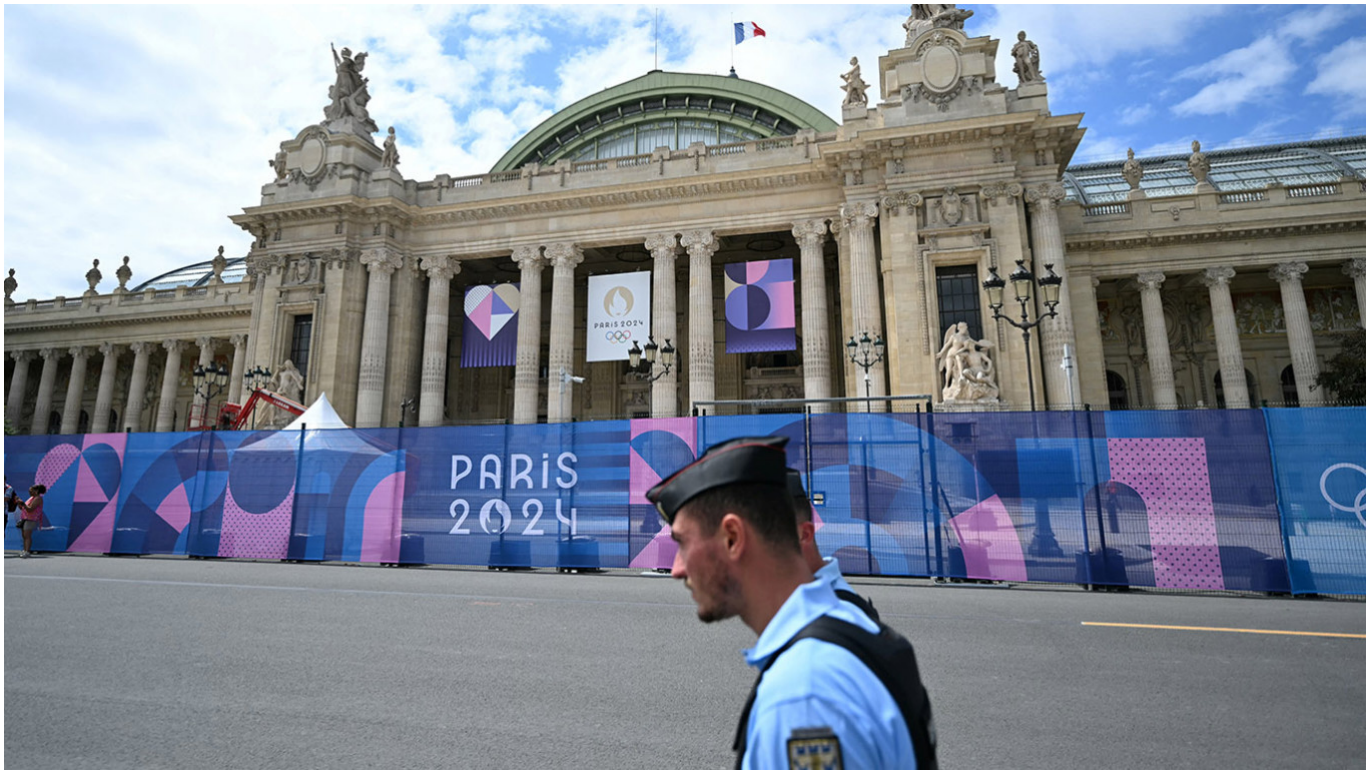
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Russian Chef Behind Alleged Olympic Games Plot – Le Monde

July 24, 2024



Paris prepares for the 2024 Summer Olympic Games. **Kirill Kudryavtsev / AFP**

A Russian man arrested this week for allegedly planning to "destabilize" the Paris Olympics is an intelligence officer for Moscow who worked undercover as a chef in France for over a decade, Le Monde reported late Tuesday, citing anonymous European security and intelligence officials.

French prosecutors said the 40-year-old Russian national was arrested Tuesday for "passing intelligence to a foreign power" — a crime punishable by up to 30 years in jail.

The Paris prosecutor's office said Wednesday that evidence found at his home in the French capital raised concerns he may have planned to "organize events likely to cause destabilization during the Olympic Games," which kick off this Friday.

Le Monde, identifying the man only by the initial "K," reported that the police search of his home turned up an identity card for an elite unit of the Russian special forces that operates under the command of the Federal Security Service (FSB).

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The newspaper said that the man worked in finance before moving to France in 2010, after which he enrolled in a Paris cooking school. He later worked at a Michelin-star restaurant in Courchevel, a French Alps ski resort popular with the Russian elite.

The man appeared on several Russian reality and cooking shows and produces cooking tutorials for social media, Le Monde reported, citing his CV — where he claims to work as a "private chef."

In 2012, the suspected intelligence officer reportedly moved to Paris and informed his landlady that he was returning to Moscow to work as an "official" in the "Russian government." However, the following year he participated in mandatory "civic training sessions" for foreigners who want to settle in France long-term, according to Le Monde.

In May, Western intelligence services picked up a call the man had allegedly made to his Russian handler before taking a flight from Turkey to France.

Russia's Embassy in Paris said it has not received any official notification of the arrest of its citizen and has asked the French authorities for clarification.

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