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French Researcher to Stand Trial in Moscow on Sept. 3

By AFP

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Laurent Vinatier in court. **Sofya Sandurskaya / TASS**

A French citizen accused of gathering information about the Russian military and violating the country's laws on "foreign agents" will go on trial next week, Moscow's court system said Monday.

Laurent Vinatier, who worked for a Swiss conflict mediation NGO before he was arrested in Moscow in June, faces up to five years in prison if convicted of the charges against him. France has urged Russia to release Vinatier, saying he has been "arbitrarily detained."

Investigators say the 48-year-old French citizen collected military information that could be used against Russia by foreign states. Under Russian law, anybody who gathers or shares material on Russia's military or security services must register with the authorities as a "foreign agent."

In previous court hearings, Vinatier admitted to violating Russian law and apologized.

Vinatier, who holds a PhD in political science, is an adviser with the Geneva-based Center for Humanitarian Dialogue and a researcher on Russia and other post-Soviet countries.

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