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Kyrgyzstan Says It Arrested Suspected U.S.-Russia Arms Trafficker

By AFP

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A border crossing between Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan. **Gavriil Grigorov / TASS**

Law enforcement authorities in Kyrgyzstan said Thursday that they arrested a suspected arms trafficker who is part of a criminal group that has shipped more than 300 weapons from the United States to Russia since April 2022.

The Central Asian nation's police said they caught the suspect "red-handed" receiving a package of parts for a rifle and handgun earlier this month.

The State Committee for National Security said in a statement it had "uncovered and suppressed the criminal activity of a transnational group" that had illegally trafficked firearms, ammunition and military uniforms from the United States to Russia via Kyrgyzstan.

It alleged that a group of Kyrgyz, Russian and American citizens shipped more than 300 weapons, including Glock pistols and AR-15 assault rifles.

Kyrgyzstan is part of a customs union with Russia, easing travel and trade between the two ex-Soviet countries.

Since Russia invaded Ukraine in 2022, it has faced allegations of being a back door for Moscow to buy sanctioned Western goods.

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