

French Researcher Jailed in Russia Transferred to Penal Colony, Family Says

By [AFP](#)

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Laurent Vinatier. **Maxim Shipenkov / EPA / TASS**

A French researcher sentenced by Russia to three years in prison has been transferred to a transit penal colony, his family told AFP on Thursday.

Laurent Vinatier, who works for a Swiss conflict mediation NGO, was arrested last summer amid heightened tensions between Moscow and the West over the war in Ukraine.

He was convicted in October of violating Russia's "foreign agent" law, a charge more commonly used against Russian nationals and often seen as politically motivated.

Vinatier's family said a lawyer informed them that he had been moved from Moscow to a transit colony in Tula, about 200 kilometers (125 miles) south of the capital. He is expected to spend 15 days in quarantine there.

It remains unclear where Vinatier will serve the rest of his sentence. In Russia's prison

system, transfers can take weeks, and families are often left in the dark about prisoners' whereabouts.

Vinatier is one of several Western nationals jailed in Russia since its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022. After losing his appeal in February, he told the court his work had aimed to "present Russia's interests in international relations."

The French government has denounced his conviction as arbitrary. President Emmanuel Macron has repeatedly called for Vinatier's release.

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