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Tyvan Opera Singer Arrested on Espionage Charges in Moscow – Mediazona

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Tsetsendalger Tagshee. **tuvafil.ru**

A decorated opera singer from Siberia's republic of Tyva was arrested in Moscow earlier this year on espionage charges, the exiled news outlet Mediazona reported Wednesday.

Tsetsendelger Tegshee, 31, was born in Mongolia near the Russian border. He studied art in the Tyvan capital of Kyzyl and has performed with the Tyva State Philharmonic since 2018.

Moscow's Lefortovsky District Court ordered Tegshee to be placed in pre-trial detention on Jan. 29, Mediazona reported. Details of the case remain unknown, the outlet added.

Mediazona reported that Tegshee is believed to hold Mongolian citizenship, as Russian law enforcement authorities typically press espionage charges against foreign nationals. It was unclear whether he also holds Russian citizenship.

If convicted of espionage, Tegshee faces up to 20 years in prison.

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Mongolia's Consulate General in Moscow declined to comment on the case or confirm whether its diplomats had visited Tegshee in detention, Mediazona said.

Tegshee's social media activity would appear to support the claim that he has been in police custody since late January, with his last Instagram and VKontakte posts dated Jan. 25 and Jan. 27, respectively. Before his reported arrest, Tegshee regularly posted on social media.

However, his wife Yelena Kuular, also a singer with the Tyva State Philharmonic, denied his arrest in comments to Mediazona. She said her husband was visiting his parents in a remote area without internet access and would "get in touch soon."

The couple's joint VKontakte account remained active in February and March, including a Feb. 6 repost of the Philharmonic's birthday message to Tegshee.

Tegshee was scheduled to perform alongside Kuular and others in Kyzyl on Feb. 10, but the concert was canceled for unknown reasons, a box office employee told Mediazona.

In January, Tyva Governor Vladislav Khovalyg awarded both Tegshee and Kuular for their "contributions to professional art and active participation in the Year of National Unity projects."

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