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Man Suspected of Spying for Russia Held in Greece

By AFP

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The Greek Foreign Ministry. **Valery Sharifulin / TASS**

Authorities on Friday remanded in custody a Greek man suspected of photographing supply convoys on behalf of Russia in the Greek port city of Alexandroupolis, a judicial source said.

Alexandroupolis has been a key gateway for the American military, used to transport supplies into Europe under a mutual defense pact.

The 59-year-old man of Georgian descent was arrested Tuesday in the northeastern city and taken before an investigating magistrate for a hearing Friday.

A police source told AFP that the suspect, who has identified himself as a house painter, was targeting military convoys to Ukraine, according to footage retrieved from his cellphone.

The man "confessed to taking photos and video of military material, acting on behalf of

another person to whom he sent the footage via an encrypted application," the police said in a statement Tuesday.

But during Friday's hearing, the suspect said he had "done nothing illegal," according to a judicial source, and that he had not held or transmitted confidential information.

He said "photos showing the transport of NATO equipment have already been published many times in the media, both locally and on the internet," the judicial source added.

Russian army veteran

The police source said the suspect, who had served in the Russian army in his youth, had apparently been enlisted by Russia's GRU military intelligence service via an intermediary.

The man told police that he had declined payment and was sending the footage voluntarily, the source said.

He faces a prison sentence of five to 10 years if convicted of espionage.

Greek media have reported that the intermediary was a Georgian man with organized crime links living in Lithuania.

He was arrested in Lithuania in March, Greek reports said Friday — information that Lithuanian authorities did not wish to comment on.

In 2023, a Russian woman was revealed to have been living in Greece for years under the identity of a long-deceased Greek baby girl.

Posing as a knitting shop owner in Athens, the suspected sleeper agent fled the country before the authorities could intercept her for questioning.

Despite historic ties to Russia, Greece has supported Ukraine since the start of the invasion.

It strongly criticized Russia's invasion, hosted Ukrainian refugees and has provided humanitarian aid and weapons including infantry fighting vehicles, Kalashnikov assault rifles, launchers and ammunition, according to Kyiv.

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