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French Cyclist Arrested in Far East Russia Placed in Pre-Trial Detention Until Oct. 4

By AFP

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Sofiane Sehili. **Sofiane Sehili / Instagram**

A French cyclist arrested after trying to enter Russia's Far East will be held in jail until at least next month, Russian state media reported on Wednesday, citing a local court.

French media reported that Sofiane Sehili was arrested after crossing the Russian border with China illegally while attempting to break the record for the fastest endurance cycle from Lisbon to Vladivostok.

The RIA Novosti news agency reported that a court in Russia's Primorye region had ordered him to be held in pre-trial detention until October 4. Citing the court's press service, it did not say what charges Sehili faced.

State media reported that the hearing took place at the beginning of September.

A member of a government-linked prison monitoring organization who visited Sehili in jail told AFP that the cyclist had a Russian e-visa but had "tried to cross the border on foot at a checkpoint only accessible for Russian and Chinese citizens."

"Then he went to another crossing, where it is forbidden to cross on a bike. You need to go on a train or a bus," Vladimir Naidin, a member of the Primorye region's public monitoring commission, told AFP in a phone interview.

Naidin said Sehili was in good health but was struggling to communicate with officials in the prison facility given the language barrier. He was being held in a cell with another inmate.

"We are monitoring everything closely and are treating him the same way we would any Russian citizen," Naidin said.

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