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FSB Says It Arrested African Man Spying for Ukraine

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Vasily Kuzmichenok / Moskva News Agency

Russia's FSB security service said Wednesday that it arrested an African man in the southern city of Astrakhan on accusations of spying for Ukraine.

The man, identified only as a citizen of a North African country, was officially registered as a foreign resident living in Astrakhan, the FSB said.

Law enforcement authorities claimed the man contacted Ukrainian intelligence officers online, after which he "gathered and transmitted information" about military sites and critical infrastructure in Astrakhan so that it could be used against Russia.

The man was charged with espionage, which carries a maximum sentence of 20 years in prison.

A video shared by Russian state news agencies showed masked FSB agents escorting the man, his face blurred, in and out of government buildings.

It was not immediately clear how the man had pleaded to the charges or whether diplomats from his country were assisting him. Ukraine has not commented on the allegations.

In its statement, the FSB said the case underscored Ukraine's alleged efforts to recruit agents in Russia through messaging platforms such as WhatsApp and Telegram.

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