The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Russian Nuclear Engineer Sentenced to 18 Years on Treason, Terrorism Charges

October 08, 2025



Alexander Avilov / Moskva News Agency

A Russian nuclear engineer has been sentenced to 18 years in a maximum-security prison for donating to Ukraine-based paramilitary units of Russian citizens, the Kommersant business daily reported Wednesday, citing court records.

Ruslan Shadiyev, a research engineer at the Russian Federal Nuclear Center (RFNC–VNIIEF) in Sarov, Nizhny Novgorod region, was convicted of treason and aiding terrorist activity by the the Second Western District Military Court.

Investigators said Shadiyev transferred around 1,200 rubles ($13) from his cryptocurrency wallet to the Freedom of Russia Legion and the Russian Volunteer Corps, two units of Russian citizens fighting on Ukraine's side that Moscow has designated as terrorist organizations.

Some funds also reportedly went to Idite Lesom ("Get Lost"), a human rights group that helps Russians escape military service that is designated as a "foreign agent," prosecutors said.

Shadiev had pleaded for leniency in court, saying he was unaware of the recipients' legal status as terrorist organizations and that he believed he was donating to people in need.

Related article: Switching Sides: The Elusive 'Russian Legion' Fighting With Ukraine

According to Kommersant, his relatives later sold property and donated several million rubles to support Russia's war effort in an attempt to mitigate the consequences.

However, the court rejected his appeal, leaving the verdict in force. His defense team said it plans to challenge the ruling before the Supreme Court's Military Collegium.

Shadiyev's case comes amid a wider crackdown under Russia's treason and espionage laws since the invasion of Ukraine.

According to data from the Kirill Parubets Analytical Center, Russian courts issued 224 treason or espionage verdicts in the first half of 2025 alone, the highest number in modern Russian history.

A total of 232 people faced such charges during that period, meaning courts handed down nearly two convictions per working day on average. By comparison, 167 people were convicted under similar articles in all of 2023, and 143 in the first half of 2024. Every case resulted in a guilty verdict and a real prison sentence.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2025/10/08/russian-nuclear-engineer-sentenced-to-18-years-for-treason-terrorism-charges-a90757