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Far East Court Upholds Detention of French Cyclist

By AFP

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Sofiane Sehili. **Social media**

A court in the Far East Primorye region on Thursday upheld the detention of Sofiane Sehili, a French endurance cyclist arrested last month while attempting to set a world record for cycling across Eurasia.

Sehili, 44, faces up to two years in prison on charges of illegally crossing the Russian border. He was arrested in early September after entering Russia from China through a crossing restricted to trains and buses.

The Primorsky Region Court said it had reviewed Sehili's appeal and confirmed the "legitimacy and validity" of a lower court's decision to place him in pretrial detention on Sept. 6. His lawyer, Alla Kushnir, told state media that she planned to challenge the ruling further.

Sehili, who began his journey in Lisbon in early July, had cycled thousands of miles across 17

countries and was nearing his destination in Vladivostok when he was arrested.

His partner, Fanny Bensussan, told France 3 Occitanie that he believed border guards would allow him to enter on his bicycle.

"He thought only about his athletic achievement," Bensussan said.

The court initially ordered Sehili's detention until Oct. 4, later extending it to Nov. 3.

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