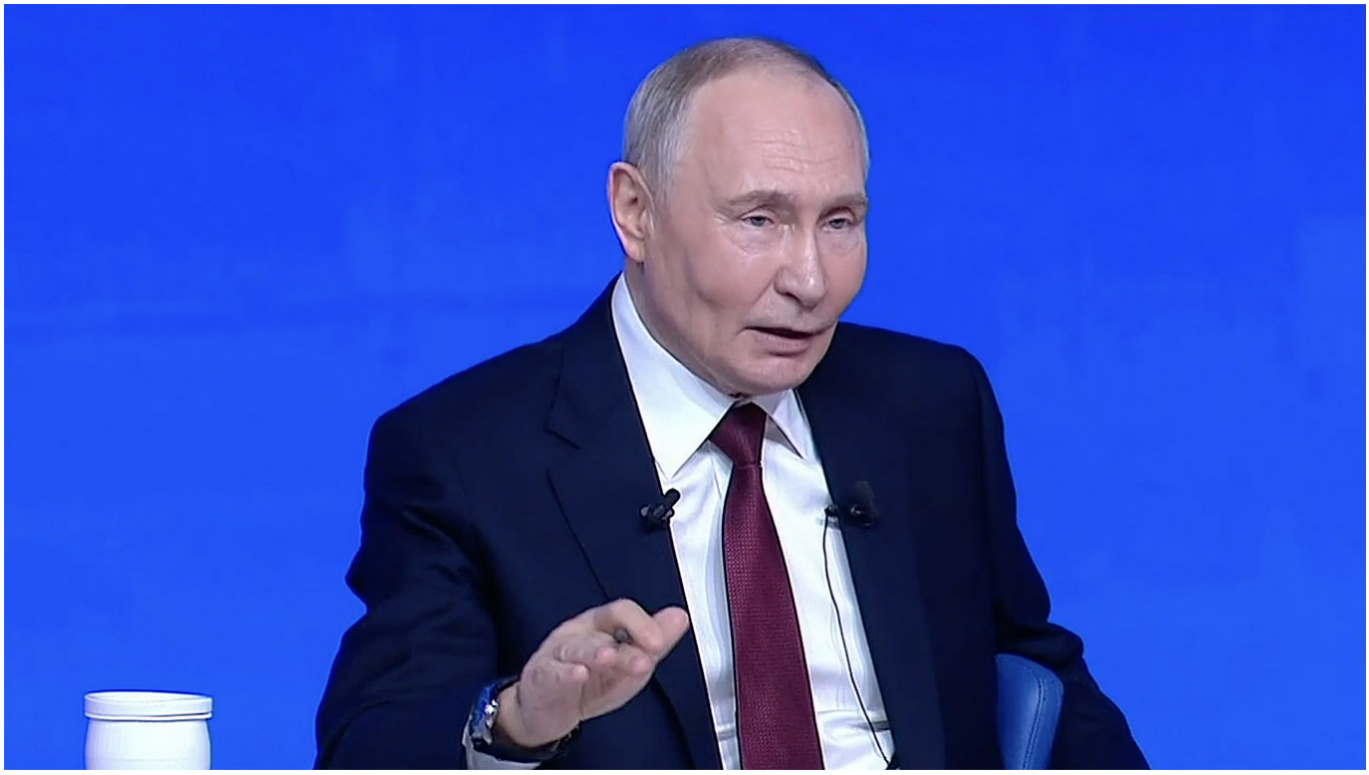
The Moscow Times
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Putin Promises to Look Into Case of French Researcher Jailed in Russia

By AFP

December 19, 2025



kremlin.ru

President Vladimir Putin said Friday that he would look into the case of French researcher Laurent Vinatier, jailed in Russia for failing to register as a "foreign agent" and facing 20 years on fresh espionage charges.

Vinatier, who works for a Swiss conflict mediation NGO, was jailed in June 2024 and is serving a three-year sentence, but faces fresh allegations of espionage.

"I don't know anything about this case. This is the first I've heard of it," Putin said about Vinatier's case, which has been widely reported on by French and international media.

"But I promise you I'll definitely find out what it is. And if there's even the slightest chance of resolving this matter favorably, if Russian law allows it, we'll make every effort," Putin said during his annual televised "Direct Line" call-in show.

Vinatier is one of several Westerners to have been arrested after Putin launched the full-scale war on Ukraine in February 2022.

Several U.S. citizens have been arrested and then released in prisoner exchanges brokered by both U.S. President Donald Trump and his predecessor Joe Biden.

Vinatier's family have rejected the accusations against him, saying he is a victim of the tensions between Moscow and Paris over Russia's war.

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