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FSB Arrests Russian Man Suspected of Spying for Moldova

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Vasily Kuzmichyonok / Moskva News Agency

Russia's FSB security service said Thursday that its officers arrested a man for allegedly gathering information for Moldova's spy agency.

The man, identified only as a Russian citizen, traveled to Moscow in December to carry out an assignment "aimed against Russia's national security" on behalf of Moldova's Information and Security Service (SIS), the FSB said in a statement.

In a video released by Russian state media, an FSB officer said the SIS directed the man to "collect and share information about the work of opposition parties and activists, their funding and the personal data of FSB employees."

"In addition, the man regularly visited Russia, where he met with public officials and government personnel," the FSB officer said, identifying the alleged Moldovan agent's superior as an SIS officer by the name Mihail Petrescu.

According to the FSB, the Russian man was cooperating with investigators. In an interrogation video released by the security agency, he claimed to have been "forced" to work "periodically" with Moldova's SIS.

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The man was charged with secretly working with a foreign government and placed in pre-trial detention. The charge carries a maximum sentence of eight years in prison.

Moldova's SIS later rejected the FSB accusations.

"Such statements represent an attempt to manipulate public opinion and raise tensions in the region," the spy agency said.

Likewise, Moldovan President Maia Sandu called the allegations false.

"Unfortunately, there are several cases when our citizens are arrested and imprisoned without any real grounds for such actions from Moscow," she told a press conference.

Relations between Moscow and Chisinau have rapidly deteriorated since the full-scale invasion of Ukraine, which neighbors Moldova.

Moldova has repeatedly accused Russia of attempts to destabilize the country. The Kremlin has denied those allegations and accused Chisinau of deliberately sabotaging bilateral relations.

AFP contributed reporting.

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