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Kazakhstan Deports IT Specialist to Russia, Where He Is Arrested on Treason Charges

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Alexander Kachkurkin. **@deptone / Telegram**

Kazakh authorities have deported an IT specialist to Russia, where he was immediately arrested and charged with treason over alleged money transfers to Ukraine, the Russian human rights group Perviy Otdel said.

Alexander Kachkurkin, 25, is a Ukrainian citizen who grew up in Crimea and later had Russian citizenship "forced" upon him after Moscow annexed the peninsula in 2014, Perviy Otdel said.

In recent years he had been living in Almaty for political reasons and working as a DevOps engineer, including on contracts with U.S.-based company OpenAI.

According to Perviy Otdel, Almaty police on Jan. 28 drew up two administrative violations against Kachkurkin for crossing the road in the wrong place and for smoking a hookah indoors, which the group said were fabricated.

On that basis, police sought his expulsion from Kazakhstan for “disrespect for the laws and sovereignty” of the country.

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The entire process from the drafting of the protocols to the court ruling and deportation took only a few hours, compared with weeks in similar cases, the group said.

After being flown to Russia, Kachkurkin was detained on the aircraft and later placed in pre-trial custody by Moscow’s Basmanny District Court on high treason charges for allegedly transferring funds to Ukraine.

The charge carries a sentence of 12 to 20 years in prison or a life sentence.

Yevgeny Smirnov, a lawyer with Perviy Otdel, said the case showed Kazakh law enforcement being used to facilitate prosecutions by Russian security services and warned that Kazakhstan was becoming unsafe “even for Ukrainian citizens.”

Perviy Otdel estimates that about 10% of all treason, espionage and related cases brought in Russia in 2025 were linked to financial transfers to Ukraine.

The group said it had sent requests for comment to Kazakhstan’s Interior Ministry and the Almaty district police involved, but had not received a response by publication.

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