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Russian Scholar of North Korea Says He Was Detained and Expelled From Latvia

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Andrei Lankov. **@a_lankov / Telegram**

Andrei Lankov, a prominent Russian scholar on North Korea, said Wednesday that he was detained during a lecture in Latvia and expelled from the country after being declared persona non grata.

Lankov, who holds dual Russian and Australian citizenship, was due to give a presentation on North Korean politics in Riga when police showed up at the lecture venue and detained him.

"They said I had been placed on the foreign ministry's list of people who are banned from entering Latvia, and I must now be immediately deported," the historian wrote on his Telegram channel.

Lankov, 62, said police did not explain why he was banned from entering Latvia. The Russian Anti-War Committee, an exiled civil society group, said late Tuesday that Lankov's lawyer had been informed of Latvia's decision to declare him persona non grata last week.

The Moscow Times contacted Latvia's foreign ministry for comment.

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Lankov told NK News, where he is a long-time contributor and serves as a director of its parent company, Korea Risk Group, that he believes he was expelled for his "excessively objective" views on North Korea.

"They see it as a problem... I say positive things about North Korea sometimes, and when negative, not in a hysterical style," he said.

Lankov, who lives in Seoul and teaches history at Kookmin University, said he safely reached Estonia, where he is scheduled to give a similar lecture on North Korean politics later on Wednesday.

A native of Soviet Leningrad, now St. Petersburg, Lankov lived and studied in Pyongyang as an exchange student in the 1980s.

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