

Ex-Communist Party Lawmaker in Murmansk Accused of Passing Sensitive Information to Ukraine

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Gennady Stepakhno. **Video grab**

A former regional lawmaker and head of the Murmansk chapter of Russia's Communist Party is facing treason charges following his arrest earlier this month, Russian media [reported](#) Thursday, citing the FSB security service.

Law enforcement officials [arrested](#) 76-year-old Gennady Stepakhno on Oct. 9, after which a judge ruled that he be placed in pre-trial detention for two months. The exact charges against him were not immediately made public.

Stepakhno had served as a lawmaker in the Murmansk region's legislative assembly since 2007 before losing his seat in elections last month. He also headed the Communist Party's regional chapter between 2004 and 2021.

In an FSB statement [carried](#) by the Interfax news agency, Stepakhno was accused of using his

position in office to share sensitive government documents and details about “engineering facilities” with Ukrainian intelligence agencies.

Under Russian law, treason carries a maximum sentence of life imprisonment for men. It was not immediately clear whether Stepakhno pleaded guilty.

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Local media outlets in Murmansk, citing anonymous sources close to the former lawmaker, [reported](#) that law enforcement officials may be investigating Stepakhno based on a phone call he made about the construction of an Indian pharmaceutical plant in Murmansk. According to those reports, he discussed sensitive information about the project with a relative who lives abroad.

In a separate report, the exiled news outlet The Insider [suggested](#) that Stepakhno’s criminal prosecution may be connected to his alleged long-running feud with fellow Communist Party member Oleg Ryabtsev over questions of party finances.

The Moscow Times could not independently verify either report.

Stepakhno is the latest Communist Party member to face criminal prosecution following State Duma and regional elections late last month, during which the ruling United Russia party gained a supermajority in the lower house of Russian parliament.

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