

Estonian Spy Chief Charged in Hijack

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The  **Moscow Times**

Investigators have charged a former Estonian foreign intelligence chief with hijacking a Russian freighter in 2009.

The Arkhangelsk branch of the Investigative Committee on Friday accused Eerik-Niiles Kross of organizing the takeover of the Arctic Sea vessel in July 2009 after it left a Finnish port for Algeria carrying timber.

Authorities say the ship was hijacked in the Baltic Sea, the Navy seized it weeks later off Cape Verde and the eight hijackers have been tried and convicted. Speculation has persisted, however, that the ship was actually carrying S-300 surface-to-air missiles for Iran or Syria.

Kross told Estonian newspaper Postimees that the charges against him are “absurd,” and Estonian Justice Minister Kristen Michal told Itar-Tass that Kross won’t be extradited.

Kross ran for parliament in 2011 in hope of becoming interior minister, but his party lost, Interfax said.

(AP, MT)

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