

Cat Caught Smuggling Contraband to Prison Inmates

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The  **Moscow Times**

Prison guards at a penal colony in the northern city of Ukhta in the Komi republic busted a cat attempting to smuggle a mobile phone to a group of cunning inmates, the Federal Prison Service announced.

The cat, found with a mobile phone taped to its back, is believed to have been sent by a former inmate who was just released from the facility, the agency said in a statement published Wednesday.

Two mobile phones and a SIM card were confiscated from the animal before it was released, the statement said. Mobile phones are prohibited among the prison's inmates.

This is the second time a feline has been unmasked as an accomplice to the inmates at a prison in the Komi republic. Last summer, the same scheme was discovered at another prison in the area.

Cats have proven popular among Russian inmates looking to skirt the rules, who have been

known to use the animals to transport not just phones, but also drugs.

In August 2012, narcotics police in Rostov discovered that several inmates at a local facility had been running a heroin-smuggling scheme with the help of a cat. They had been stuffing the animal's collar with the drug and sending it to sneak into the prison. A similar case was uncovered in 2010 in the republic of Tatarstan.

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