

Russian Security Services Say 'Spy Pen' Found in Pokemon Go Player's Home

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Russian security services say they found a “spy-pen” in the home of video blogger Ruslan Sokolovsky, who was recently detained for filming himself playing Pokemon Go in a Yekaterinburg cathedral. Police have charged Sokolovsky with committing an extremist act and offending religious sensitivities. If convicted, he could face several years in prison.

Russia's Investigative Committee said the pen could be used to receive illegal information from abroad. Other potentially incriminating items in the suspect's apartment include a video camera, a tripod, and a professional microphone.

Police are also investigating magazines published by the video blogger, which they say contain illustrations which incite religious hatred. Earlier this year, Sokolovsky launched a self-titled magazine for atheists. He wrote that: “we have been inspired by Charlie Hebdo and have decided that there are too few such publications in Russia that take an absolutely

amoral approach to ridiculing the contemporary national reality.”

The Russian Orthodox Church initially called for Sokolovsky's release. Its Yekaterinburg representatives said the church “does not lust for blood.” But the church has since changed its stance on the matter. Its local spokesman, Veniamin Raynikov, told the press that the church “will not put pressure on the court so that we appear to be the good guys. We support re-education.”

The blogger's mother hopes the church will forgive her 21 year-old son. In an interview with the pro-Kremlin Life News channel, she said: “he should not have done it. We want to talk to bishop Kirill so that the whole thing will end in peace and friendship.” She also said she recently lost her older son and that the family buried him in a church ceremony. “I went through such sadness – and now this. I want to talk to the church, perhaps they could release him at least out of pity for me.”

Amnesty International has released a statement urging Russian authorities to release the blogger, calling his detention an “absurd attack on freedom of expression.”

“The farcical nature of the case against the Russian blogger, detained for playing Pokemon Go in a church, demonstrates what happens when the authorities do not value freedom of expression. Even if someone deems Sokolovsky's behavior disrespectful, authorities should not imprison people purely for offending religious beliefs,” said John Dalhuisen, director of Amnesty International's Europe and Central Asia office.

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