# Bulgarian spy ring exposed in London trial



A complex and concerning case involving a Bulgarian spy ring with connections to Russian state interests has recently come to light, culminating in guilty verdicts for several individuals at the Old Bailey in London. This spy network, referred to colloquially as the "Minions," has been accused of engaging in extensive surveillance operations, compromising national security, and plotting potential kidnappings.

The trial revealed that the group operated for nearly three years and included prominent figures such as beautician Vanya Gaberova, 30, decorator Tihomir Ivanchev, 39, lab technician Katrin Ivanova, 33, along with their handlers, Orlin Roussev, 46, and Biser Dzhambazov, 43. Ivan Stoyanov, 32, a former cage fighter, had also pleaded guilty to charges under the Official Secrets Act prior to the trial's conclusion. These individuals were found guilty of conspiring to pass sensitive information to Russian agents.

The espionage activities included tracking and targeting various individuals throughout Europe, with a particular focus on the dissident lawyer Kirill Kachur, who received threats on his life. Kachur disclosed that he only discovered he was being followed and targeted for kidnapping after learning about it in the news. "They wanted to kill me and were following me," he stated. The network reportedly intended to send Kachur back to Moscow, either deceased or alive, for a substantial payment. Discussions captured during the investigation indicated a willingness to dispose of Kachur if necessary, as long as he was apprehended.

The trial also highlighted the group's use of innovative spy tactics, such as adapting a soft toy known as a "Minion" to serve as a surveillance tool. Such tactics reflect the group's real engagement in covert operations, testing the limits of both technical ingenuity and ethical conduct when it comes to intelligence gathering.

Roussev, who depicted himself as akin to "Q" from the James Bond franchise, personally designed and supplied an array of gadgets and devices for the group's operations. This included an IMSI grabber, a device capable of intercepting mobile phone signals over large distances, underscoring the technical capabilities the group possessed.

In the midst of these disconcerting revelations, the individual experiences of the accused have also been detailed. Gaberova, for example, was linked to a honeytrap operation aimed at targeting journalists, while Ivanchev had once pursued a career in professional swimming and later struggled to make ends meet. Family members of these individuals have expressed disbelief and distress regarding their involvement, with some insisting their loved ones were entangled in espionage through misjudgment rather than intent.

As the case proceeds to sentencing, the accused face lengthy sentences for their roles in the espionage activities. The outcomes of this trial may have broader implications, raising questions about the reach of foreign influences into local lives and security operations on UK soil. As authorities continue to investigate and reinforce counterintelligence measures, the ramifications of the trial are expected to resonate within both governmental and public spheres concerning national security protocols and international relations.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/bulgarians-convicted-spying-russia-in-uk-accused-honeytraps/> - This article corroborates the involvement of Bulgarian nationals in a Russian spy ring, including their use of sophisticated surveillance methods and 'honeytrap' operations. It also details the roles of key figures like Vanya Gaberova and Tihomir Ivanchev.
* <https://www.cps.gov.uk/cps/news/bulgarian-trio-convicted-conspiring-spy-russia> - This source confirms the convictions of Bulgarian individuals for conspiring to spy for Russia, highlighting their use of advanced technology and fake identities. It also mentions the leadership role of Orlin Roussev and the involvement of other members like Biser Dzhambazov.
* <https://news.met.police.uk/news/group-convicted-of-being-part-of-russian-spying-operation-494869> - This article provides details on the complex investigation into the Bulgarian spy ring, including the seizure of sophisticated spying equipment and the group's targeting of journalists and political figures. It emphasizes the role of Jan Marsalek as an intermediary with Russian intelligence.
* <https://www.courts.michigan.gov/49008a/siteassets/publications/benchbooks/evidence/evidbb.pdf> - Although not directly related to the Bulgarian spy ring, this document discusses legal principles relevant to evidence handling and admissibility in criminal cases, which could be applicable to how evidence was processed in the trial.
* <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2024/04/22/2024-07496/guidance-for-federal-financial-assistance> - This document does not directly relate to the Bulgarian spy ring case but provides general guidance on federal financial assistance, which might be tangentially relevant to broader discussions on international security and financial transactions.
* <https://www.noahwire.com> - This is the source of the original article, providing an overview of the Bulgarian spy ring case and its implications for national security and international relations.
* <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14455493/On-trail-Putins-bed-hopping-spies-Soviet-era-tower-block-remote-mountain-village-GEORGE-ODLING-pieces-lives-Bulgarians-came-Britain-spy-Russia.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data