

Driver Jailed for 3 Years — Starting in 2024

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An Irkutsk court on Tuesday sentenced the daughter of a senior local official to three years in prison for killing a pedestrian in a traffic accident — but ruled that she will not begin serving the sentence until 2024 because she has an infant son.

The ruling means that Anna Shavenkova, 28, daughter of the Irkutsk region's election committee chairwoman, will likely face no prison time, thanks to a provision in the Criminal Code for young mothers and fathers that a court famously refused to grant pregnant Yukos lawyer Svetlana Bakhmina in 2006.

Shavenkova pleaded guilty in court to running over sisters Yulia and Yelena Pyatkova when her car veered onto a sidewalk in downtown Irkutsk on Dec. 2. Yelena Pyatkova, 34, died and her 27-year-old sister was crippled in the crash, which was filmed by surveillance cameras. [Editor's caution: The [video](#) contains footage of the two women being thrown by the car.]

Footage published online shows Shavenkova after the incident ignoring the people she had run over, first examining the hood of her car for damage and then making a call on her cell phone, leaving passers-by to call an ambulance.

Shavenkova, who news reports said had little driving experience but numerous speeding tickets prior to the incident, later claimed that she was in shock. She said she lost control of the car after confusing the gas and brake pedals.

The court ruled Tuesday that Shavenkova, who gave birth to a boy on March 6, will not be imprisoned until her son reaches the age of 14, which will happen in 2024.

The Criminal Code allows judges at their discretion to delay the sentences of pregnant women or mothers with small children until the child reaches 14. Moreover, a court can revoke the sentence altogether if the convict does not commit any crimes in the interim. The law does not cover felonies, which Shavenkova was not convicted of committing.

Despite appeals from human rights activists, a court refused to invoke the clause in the case of Bakhmina, who was sentenced to seven years in prison in 2006 as part of the government's legal onslaught against Yukos, once the country's biggest oil company. Bakhmina, who had two underage children and was pregnant during the trial, was released on parole last year.

The Irkutsk court ignored the fact that Shavenkova has a husband who could take care of the boy, [said](#) the Pyatkov family's lawyer, Viktor Grigorov, Gazeta.ru reported. He said the family would appeal the sentence and sue for damages.

“Relatives had hoped until the last moment that the defendant would voluntarily offer compensation, but she did not react at all,” Grigorov said.

Legal experts expressed doubt that Shavenkova would spend any time in prison.

“A delayed sentence is a straightforward road to not serving it,” said Alexander Grinenko, a law professor at the prestigious Moscow State Institute of International Relations, RIA-Novosti reported.

“They will come up with something during these 14 years so that she won't have to serve the sentence,” lawyer Andrei Karpov told RIA-Novosti.

He added that the rule to delay sentences for young parents is “strange.”

“Women are even giving birth in prisons,” Karpov said.

Irkutsk police investigators initially did not suspect Shavenkova of wrongdoing in the crash and treated her as a witness until an outcry over the online video, which was posted on YouTube and other web sites, prompted the criminal case that led to the trial.

Shavenkova's mother, Irkutsk regional election committee chairwoman Lyudmila Shavenkova, made no public comment about Tuesday's verdict. But she earlier said her daughter was being singled out because she was the relative of a public figure.

“It's sad that my daughter was thrown to the lions because she's a politician's child,” she [said](#)

in December, Komsomolskaya Pravda reported. "I'm not a die-hard bureaucrat, and my daughter is not a wild, reckless person."

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