

Russians Sentenced to 2 Years in Prison for 'Ukrainian' Vandalism

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A Lenin statue in Novosibirsk

A Siberian court sentenced two young men to more than two years in prison each for painting a war memorial and statue of Lenin in the blue and yellow national colors of Ukraine and drawing fascist imagery on buildings of the local branches of the ruling United Russia and opposition Communist parties.

Kirill Korzhavin, 24, was given a two year and six month prison sentence while Vladislav Shipovalov, 20, was sentenced to two years, according to a statement on the website of Leninsky District Court in Novosibirsk. The court gave the other defendants, Sergei Belov and Nazar Kollektionov, limitations on their freedom of movement for a year.

The men were sentenced on charges of vandalism motivated by political hatred toward the United Russia and Communist parties for the graffiti that was done in December 2014.

Russia has seen an upsurge in cases against those involved in pro-Ukraine stunts as relations have turned bitter between the two countries over the Kremlin's annexation of Crimea

and support for separatists fighting troops loyal to Kiev in the east of the former Soviet country.

All the defendants remained silent in court apart from Korzhavin, who asked for forgiveness from any war veterans he had insulted, according to local newspaper Sovetskaya Sibir.

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