

Russian Court Turns Down Savchenko's Polygraph Test Request

September 30, 2015



Maria Savchenko, mother of Ukrainian army pilot Nadezhda Savchenko, arrives for a court hearing in the southern border town of Donetsk in Rostov region, Russia, Sept. 29.

A Russian court has turned down the request by Ukrainian pilot Nadezhda Savchenko to take a polygraph test to corroborate her testimony and provide evidence of her innocence on charges of abetting the killing of two Russian journalists.

Savchenko's trial is being held in the small southern Russian town of Donetsk, which has the same name as the Ukrainian city that is the main rebel stronghold, near the Ukrainian border. Tuesday's session was available on a webcast.

During the trial, Savchenko and her lawyer Ilya Novikov asked the court to either allow the military pilot to be hooked up to a polygraph machine when she testifies, or to admit the results of a previous lie-detector test she had taken during the investigation, independent newspaper Novaya Gazeta reported.

"I want to testify with the use of a lie detector," Savchenko was quoted as saying. "Such an interrogation has been done by investigators, but it has been withheld from the court. Are investigators afraid that everything will fall apart if that polygraph [result] is presented to the court?"

The prosecution objected, and after conferring in the courtroom, the panel of judges turned down Savchenko's request, the report said.

Savchenko was captured by pro-Russian forces in eastern Ukraine last year and handed over to Moscow, which charged her with abetting the killing of two Russian journalists and then crossing into Russia illegally.

The military pilot and her supporters denounce the charges as trumped-up and politically motivated. She has emerged as a symbol of resistance at home, and has been elected to the Ukrainian parliament and voted as a delegate to the Parliamentary Assembly of Europe.

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