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Captured Pilot Savchenko to Hear 'Tough' Sentence by End of Year — Investigators

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Ukrainian military pilot Nadezhda Savchenko

Nadezhda Savchenko, the captured Ukrainian pilot now on trial in the Russian city of Rostov, may expect to see her case conclude in a "tough" sentence by the end of the year, according to the spokesman for the Russian Investigative Committee Vladimir Markin, Russian media reported.

"Our consideration [of the Savchenko case] has entered its final stage. I think that a sentence will be passed by the end of the year — and something tells me it is going to be a tough one," Markin said in an interview with the Russian radio station Vesti.fm, the TASS and RIA Novosti agencies wrote Friday.

"The crimes committed by ... Savchenko are very clearly regulated by our legislation, as they were committed against Russian citizens," he went on to say, RIA Novosti reported.

Russian investigators allege that Savchenko, who served in a volunteer battalion fighting with government troops against pro-Russian rebels in eastern Ukraine, provided the coordinates for a mortar attack which killed two Russian journalists in June 2014, and then crossed illegally into Russia.

The pilot's lawyers say that she was spirited into the country by Moscow-backed separatists after being captured in the same month.

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