

Ukrainian Pilot Savchenko Will Not Appeal Russian Sentence

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Ukrainian military pilot Nadezhda Savchenko

Ukrainian pilot Nadezhda Savchenko will not appeal the sentence she is expected to receive from a Russian court, because doing so would create a false impression that she has any trust in Russia's judiciary system, her lawyer said Wednesday, the opposition-minded Open Russia portal reported.

A verdict against Savchenko, who is on trial in the Russian city of Donetsk, may be reached by the end of the year, and will likely carry a “tough” sentence, Russia's Investigative Committee spokesman Vladimir Markin has been quoted by media reports as saying earlier this month.

There will be no appeal, the pilot's lawyer Ilya Novikov told Open Russia.

Savchenko's refusal to file an appeal is motivated primarily by “moral” considerations — an unwillingness to “create an impression by her actions that Russia has courts,” Novikov was quoted as saying by Radio Svoboda, a Ukrainian language service of RFE/RL.

“Russia has no courts,” he was quoted as saying.

Instead, the defense hopes that Western nations — whose governments and activists have been urging Moscow to release Savchenko — will respond with additional sanctions and pressure on Russia, Novikov said, according to Open Russia.

Russia accuses Savchenko of abetting the killing of two Russian journalists, who were killed by artillery fire in eastern Ukraine. The pilot and her supporters deny all charges, and say the pilot was captured by Moscow-backed separatist insurgents in the region and handed over to Russian authorities.

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