

Russian Performance Artist Pavlensky Avoids Jail After Vandalism Verdict

By [The Moscow Times](#)

May 19, 2016



Pyotr Pavlensky listens during a hearing at a Russian courthouse.

Russian performance artist Pyotr Pavlensky has avoided a jail sentence despite being found guilty of vandalism by a Moscow court.

The activist received a sentence of one year and four months, which was then struck off as the statute of limitations for criminal responsibility had already expired.

The activist was charged with vandalism after setting alight a pile of tires on a St. Petersburg bridge on Feb. 23, 2014. The action, titled “Freedom,” was in support of the Euromaidan revolution in Ukraine, Pavlensky said.

Alongside the burning tires, the artist and his friends built an imitation barricade, beat drums and shouted Maidan slogans.

“Pavlensky was an active participant in a group that violated ethical and moral norms,” the

court ruled. They also upheld claims that the bridge was culturally and historically valuable.

Pavlensky remains in detention to await a verdict on a second vandalism case. He received the second charge after setting fire to the door of the Federal Security Service (FSB) headquarters in central Moscow.

Pavlensky has become notorious worldwide for his extreme performances protesting Kremlin policy. Previous actions have seen the artist slicing off part of his ear, wrapping himself in barbed wire while naked, and sewing his own mouth shut.

The 32-year-old has demanded that his performances be classed as acts of terrorism.

When prosecutors told him he would be tried on vandalism charges, the artist vowed to sit through the court hearings in silence without answering questions from the judges.

Pavlensky also paid three sex workers to attend court as his defense witnesses, telling the judge, “whether you like it or not, there is no difference between prostitutes, judges, prosecutors, teachers, directors or bureaucrats.”

Original url:

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