

# Director of Ukrainian Library in Moscow Handed 4-Year Suspended Sentence

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Natalya Sharina **Valery Sharifulin / TASS**

Natalya Sharina, former director of Moscow's State Library of Ukrainian Literature, was handed down a four- year suspended sentence on Monday for distributing extremist materials and embezzlement.

Sharina was arrested Oct. 28, 2015, on grounds of “inciting ethnic hatred and humiliating human dignity.” During a search of the library, police reportedly discovered "extremist" literature.

Two days later, Sharina was released from jail and placed under house arrest.

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The crackdown on the library and its director came as Russian-Ukrainian relations reached a

low, leading to speculation the raid was politically motivated. Authorities later shuttered the library.

Police added charges of embezzlement to Sharina's case in April this year. According to investigators, the former director spent 3.5 million rubles (\$55,000) of the library's funds to pay her legal fees.

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Commenting on the sentence, Sharina's said “it doesn't reflect reality” and that she was “shaken to the core by this whole situation,” the RBC news website reported.

Earlier this year her defense team filed a complaint to the European Court of Human Rights, claiming that the books implicating Sharina could have been planted in the library during the search.

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