

# Russian Journalist Sokolov Jailed for Extremism After Calling for Referendum

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Journalist Alexander Sokolov **Artyom Geodakyan/TASS**

A Moscow court on Thursday sentenced Russian journalist Alexander Sokolov to three and a half years in jail for extremism, in a case Sokolov described as “Orwellian.”

Sokolov, who has been in custody since his arrest in 2015, and three co-defendants were found guilty of advancing the program of a radical left-wing organization called the People's Will Army after it was banned in 2010, the RBC news agency [reports](#).

The People’s Will Army agitated to [change](#) the Russian constitution via a referendum.

Sokolov has denied the accusation and says the case is connected to his professional activity.

He previously worked at RBC, where he published an expose of corruption during the building of Russia’s Vostochny Cosmodrome near the border with China.

“This process has turned out to be singular and dystopian in Orwellian style,” Sokolov said in a statement [published](#) by the OVD-Info police monitoring website on Thursday, shortly before

the ruling.

“Whatever the formal verdict in this manufactured case, I think we can claim full moral victory,” the statement said.

The international group Reporters Without Borders has called for Sokolov’s release, while the European Court of Human Rights said last year it would examine his case.

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