

Blogger Sentenced for Criticizing Russian Aid to Ukrainian Citizens

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Anatoly Pleshanov / Vkontakte

A court in St. Petersburg has sentenced a blogger for a social media post in which he criticized Russian support for Ukrainian refugees.

Anatoly Pleshanov was added to a terrorism list in 2016 after he allegedly wrote an incendiary post on the popular social media site VK, the Moscow-based SOVA research center [said](#) Monday in an online statement.

According to official accounts, Russia has [spent](#) at least 5 billion rubles (\$84 million) on aid for Ukrainians who have fled the ongoing conflict in their country. Russia has been accused of fomenting the conflict in eastern Ukraine between pro-Russian separatists and the Kiev regime following the toppling of pro-Moscow President Viktor Yanukovich — a claim Russia denies.

SOVA cited a court ruling as saying that Pleshanov “wrote that he’s dissatisfied with Russia’s

and Russian citizens' help to Ukrainian residents."

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"The author believes that the Russian population itself doesn't enjoy this level of help and support in their country."

On Monday, a district court in St. Petersburg handed Pleshanov a one-year suspended sentence for inciting national hatred.

The exact content of the post has not been made public or included in court documents, the state-run TASS news agency [reported](#).

SOVA says Pleshanov unjustly faced criminal charges, arguing in its online statement that his post could at most be interpreted as insulting.

But, following the ruling, Pleshanov wrote in a post on his VK page that he was "pleased" with the sentence.

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