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Court Reduces Sentences of Russian Nationalists Who Attacked Ukraine Film

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SERB leader Igor Beketov (Artyom Korotayev / TASS)

A Moscow city court has reduced the jail sentences of members of an ultranationalist group that disrupted the screening of a Ukrainian war film earlier this month.

Members of the ultranationalist SERB (South East Radical Bloc) group and the Union of Paratroopers interrupted the Dec. 10 screening of Bullet's Flight, a documentary about the Ukrainian Aidar battalion, by spraying a pungent gas in the auditorium and shouting, "the blood of the Donbass people is on your hands."

Police evacuated the hall after the activists threatened viewers, hit a woman and covered the projector.

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SERB leader Igor Beketov was originally sentenced to seven days in jail for disobeying police orders to leave the premises, but his term was reduced by two days, the Interfax news agency cited his lawyer, Violetta Volkova, as saying.

The court also reduced the sentence of Oksana Shkoda, another member of the group involved in the incident, and postponed the trial of a third activist. A fourth defendant is still awaiting trial, though he says he is not a member of SERB and was in the auditorium as an audience member.

On Dec. 12, another SERB activist was handed an eight-day jail sentence for disrupting an exhibitition by U.S. photographer Jock Sturges.

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