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Russian Christian Activists Sentenced For Arson Attacks Against 'Mathilde'

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Alexander Bayanov **Moskva News Agency**

Three Russian Orthodox activists have been sentenced to two years in prison for a series of arson attacks against the creators of a controversial film depicting the love affair of the last Russian tsar.

Three members of the “Christian State — Holy Rus” group were detained in September 2017 after torching cars and threatening venues planning to screen “Mathilde." The film raised controversy among Russian conservatives for depicting the affair of Tsar Nicholas II, who is recognized as a saint in the Russian Orthodox Church, with Polish ballerina Mathilde Kschessinska.

Related article: Arson Suspects Detained Over 'Mathilde' Biopic Attacks

A Moscow city court sentenced Yury Kalinin, Alexander Bayanov and Denis Mantaluts to two

years in a penal colony, the state-run RIA Novosti news agency reported from the courtroom on Thursday.

One of the defendants, Denis Mantalutsa, has apologized to the film director's lawyer, whose car they torched outside central Moscow's Arbat district. The arson attack took place after director Alexei Uchitel's studio in St. Petersburg was torched with Molotov cocktails.

"It happened by accident, we weren't motivated by money or evil intentions," Mantalutsa was cited as saying.

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