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Russian Activist Faces 1.5 Years in Jail for Internet Memes

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Oksana Pokhodun **Facebook**

A Russian activist is reportedly facing time in jail for storing provocative memes in a private album on social media.

Russian Internet users have been increasingly targeted with prison sentences for social media activity under loosely-defined extremism laws since 2015. At least seven people were sentenced under the laws in 2017, with another man being given a 2.5 year sentence last month for reposting "extremist" images that he said were part of his dissertation research.

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A state prosecutor in the Siberian city of Krasnoyarsk asked the court to sentence activist Oksana Pokhodun to 1.5 years for "extremist" images on the Russian social media website Vkontakte, the OVD-Info police monitoring website reported Tuesday.

In an interview with the Mediazona news website, the activist said she had a private online album that included an assortment of "marginal memes," including about the events in Ukraine, priests and President Vladimir Putin.

"I think the FSB officers accessed my page, saw what they wanted and that's it," Mediazona cited her as saying.

Pokhodun maintains her innocence and says that she is being persecuted for her political activism, including organizing an anti-corruption demonstration in Krasnoyarsk last June.

Meanwhile, a supporter of opposition leader Alexei Navalny in the city of Pskov has been charged with Nazi propaganda for posting a historical photograph of a local Christian Orthodox priest shaking the hand of a Nazi soldier in front of a Nazi flag, local media reported on Tuesday.

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