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Moscow Student Convicted of Islamic State Ties Released on Parole

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Varvara Karaulova **Andrei Nikerichev / Moskva News Agency**

A Russian court has granted student Varvara Karaulova early release after she served most of her sentence for attempting to join the Islamic State terrorist group.

Karaulova, who had legally changed her name to Alexandra Ivanova, was found guilty and sentenced to four and a half years behind bars in December 2016. Her defense team petitioned for early release on parole in November 2018 with backing from the presidential human rights commissioner.

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"Release Karaulova on parole for a period of one year and 10 days," Interfax quoted Vologda court judge Alexei Koltakov as saying on Tuesday.

Her father, Pavel Karaulov, said "we're over the moon, but it's still hard to believe," the

state-run RIA Novosti news agency reported.

On Monday, Karaulova's lawyer Sergei Badamshin said a penal colony opposed releasing his defendant on parole for reasons including having one shirt button undone at work and lying in bed after feeling ill.

Karaulova left Russia in May 2015 to marry an Islamic State recruiter she had met online. She went on to help Russian security services to communicate with her former fiance, a member of the terrorist group, but police arrested her in October 2015. Prosecutors claimed that she intentionally left Russia to join the terrorist group, knowing that her actions could harm Russia.

Islamic State is a terrorist organization banned in Russia.

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