

First Russian Found Guilty Under 'Disrespect' of Authorities Law – Reports

April 24, 2019



Yury Kartyzhev [Vkontakte](#)

Russian authorities have [issued](#) the first guilty verdict under a new law criminalizing “blatant disrespect” toward the authorities for online posts calling President Vladimir Putin an expletive.

A Novgorod region court 570 kilometers northwest of Moscow found a local resident guilty and [fined](#) him 30,000 rubles (\$470) Monday for posts calling Putin “a fantastic f-----” two days after the legislation went into effect. Critics say the law that fines first-time offenses and jails repeat offenders for up to 15 days for insulting state symbols and the authorities stifles free speech.

“On March 31, Kartyzhev shared two public posts on social media with text reading ‘Putin is a fantastic expletive, Putin is a fantastic expletive,’” a judge is heard saying in a YouTube video [shared](#) by a user named Yury Kartyzhev. The court database lists Yu.D. Kartyzhev as the defendant in the case.

This is the first fine under the newly [signed](#) “blatant disrespect” law, [said](#) Pavel Chikov, head of the international human rights group Agora.

The decision has not yet entered into force and can be appealed, the court [said](#) in a press statement Tuesday.

Shortly after news of the verdict emerged, Twitter users [launched](#) a hashtag campaign playing up Kartyzhev's phrase, with some [highlighting](#) its so-called "Streisand effect" and warning ironically against its use.

The fine was imposed less than a week after Russia's federal communications watchdog reportedly [warned](#) media outlets that the phrase "Putin is a thief" and "United Russia is a party of crooks and thieves" are classified as illegal under the law.

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Last week, two Yaroslavl-based news websites were temporarily [blocked](#) under the law for publishing a photo of graffiti calling Putin an anti-gay slur. A handful of the websites have [self-censored](#) the graffiti stories after receiving orders to take them down.

Over the past hour, users on Russia's VKontakte social media site have [started](#) a flashmob on Kartyzhev's profile, posting pictures of themselves holding signs saying “Thanks to Putin” with an ironic follow-up in support of Kartyzhev.

The first signs read “‘Thanks’ to Putin for counterfeits in stores” and “‘Thanks’ to Putin for promising to promise.”

Others followed up with “‘Thanks’ to Putin for expensive and inaccessible medicine,” “extortionary taxes,” “life on credit,” “impoverished workers and pensioners,” “degrading science and education” and “selling off national wealth.”

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