

Court Jails Young Russians for 'Plotting to Overthrow Putin'

By [AFP](#)

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Prominent Russian rights group Memorial has pronounced the defendants political prisoners. **Mikhail Japaridze / TASS**

A Moscow court on Thursday sentenced three young activists to long jail terms for plotting to overthrow President Vladimir Putin in a case that has sparked protests and allegations of police overreach.

In 2018, authorities detained 10 people accusing them of belonging to an anarchist cell called the "New Greatness" that was plotting an uprising against the government.

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The group's supporters say the case was fabricated by the FSB security service and that agents infiltrated the group, financed operations and coerced its members into renting office space

and creating a charter.

Prominent Russian rights group Memorial has pronounced the young men and women political prisoners.

A judge in a Moscow court sentenced 27-year-old Ruslan Kostylenkov to seven years in a penal colony, 34-year-old Pyotr Karamzin to 6.5 years and 22-year-old Vyacheslav Kryukov to six years for creating an extremist group.

All three had been in pre-trial detention since March 2018.

Four others received suspended sentences of 4 to 6.5 years on the same charge, according to an AFP journalist in the courtroom.

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Police arrested at least three people outside the court protesting against the trial. One protestor dressed a police uniform cut the throat of a mannequin before being wrestled to the ground by police.

"We all know that an illegal act is being committed in this court," the demonstrator shouted. "We all know that the state only wants blood."

The ruling comes as critics of Putin cry foul over an increasing number of high-profile terror and treason cases deemed to be politically motivated by activists and human rights monitors.

In February, seven young anarchists and anti-fascists were sentenced to between six and 18 years in prison on terror and other charges after saying they were tortured in custody.

The FSB security services detained a respected ex-journalist Ivan Safronov last month on treason charges, while another journalist, Svetlana Prokopyeva, was found guilty of justifying terrorism.

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