

Russia Jails Math Grad Student for Attack on Ruling Party

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Azat Miftakhov. **Alexander Avilov / Moskva News Agency**

Russian math graduate student and self-described anarchist Azat Miftakhov was [sentenced](#) to six years in prison Monday after almost two years in detention on hooliganism charges his supporters say are politically motivated.

Miftakhov, 27, was initially detained in February 2019 on accusations of bomb-making, but was later held for breaking the office window of Russia's ruling political party. The Moscow State University postgraduate student says he was tortured in custody and prominent human rights group Memorial — which Russia has designated a “foreign agent” — declared Miftakhov a [political prisoner](#).

Moscow's Golovinsky district court found Miftakhov guilty of hooliganism and sentenced him to six years in a penal colony, the OVD-Info police monitoring website reported Monday.

The sentence fully meets a state prosecution request last month to jail Miftakhov for six years and hand the two other defendants suspended sentences.

Authorities accuse Miftakhov of handing a smoke bomb to a fourth suspect who hurled it inside the United Russia political party's office window in northern Moscow on the evening of Jan. 30, 2018. That suspect fled Russia in 2019.

Miftakhov has denied the charges but investigators said a secret witness who died from a cardiac incident last fall had identified the activist by his "[expressive eyebrows](#)," according to OVD-Info.

The anarchist activist's defense team, which has said it will appeal the court ruling, has voiced concerns that he may also be prosecuted under the initial bomb-making charges.

Prominent academics, including linguist Noam Chomsky, have expressed [concern](#) over allegations of Miftakhov's torture, which fellow detainees said was so gruesome that "he didn't look like a human being."

More than 2,500 mathematicians from around the world signed a petition ahead of the verdict demanding that Russia release Miftakhov and threatening to boycott the 2022 International Congress of Mathematicians, the first that Moscow is set to host since 1966. Dozens of Russian Academy of Sciences members have also written a letter in Miftakhov's support, while a petition demanding his release gathered almost 90,000 signatures.

A number of Miftakhov's supporters were detained outside a courthouse last Monday, when the judge was initially due to deliver a verdict.

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