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Russian Councilor Charged Over ‘False Information’ on Troops

By AFP

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Dmitry Petrenko. **omskgorsovet.ru**

A Russian court said Thursday that a local councilor in Siberia has been charged with knowingly sharing "false information' on army activity in Ukraine, national media reported.

Dmitry Petrenko, an elected Communist member of the municipal council in the city of Omsk, has a Telegram channel where he has posted critical views on Moscow's military operation in Ukraine.

The court's press service said Petrenko had been charged with a crime over Telegram posts that "spread knowingly false information about the use of Russian armed forces to destroy civilian infrastructure and Ukraine's civilian population," RIA Novosti state news agency reported.

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Petrenko has been charged with using his official position to do this, meaning he could face up to 10 years in jail.

He has been ordered to stay at home between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m. and can only use the Internet or other means of communication with written permission from the authorities until late May, pending trial, the city's Kuibyshev district court said.

Since launching what it calls a "special operation" in Ukraine, Russia has passed legislation making it a crime punishable by up to 15 years in prison to disseminate "false" information about its troops.

This move has caused alarm among the political opposition and independent media, who fear prosecution for any reporting of the Ukraine operation.

Russian investigators said last week they had launched a criminal case against popular journalist Alexander Nevzorov for alleging that Moscow's army deliberately shelled a maternity hospital in Ukraine's embattled city of Mariupol.

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