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Moscow Municipal Deputy Jailed for 7 Years Over ‘War Fakes’

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Alexei Gorinov. **Anatoly Zhdanov / Kommersant**

A Russian court sentenced Moscow municipal deputy Alexei Gorinov to seven years in prison Friday under censorship laws that criminalize anti-war protests.

The 60-year-old lawyer was arrested in April for spreading "knowingly false information" about the Russian army during a session of the local assembly in northern Moscow where he is a deputy.

At the session in question, which was recorded and is still available on YouTube, Gorinov's queried plans to hold an art competition for children in his local area while "children are dying" in Ukraine.

Prosecutors requested Thursday a seven-year prison term for Gorinov, accusing him of “political hatred” and “undermining the authority of the Armed Forces.”

In court, Gorinov held up an anti-war placard that read: ‘Do you still need this war?”

Embed:

> A Moscow court sentenced Alexei Gorinov to seven years in prison for spreading "knowingly false information" about the Russian army in Ukraine. https://t.co/Kap4nGuwxL
>
> — Anastasia Tenisheva (@tenisheva_a) July 8, 2022

Gorinov, who denies his guilt, is the first elected member of the opposition to be sentenced to jail for criticizing Moscow's military campaign in Ukraine.

In his last word in court on Thursday, Gorinov said "it will not be easy, but we will have to recognize that a war is a war."

A number of activists and journalists gathered inside and outside the courthouse to express their support for the municipal deputy.

Ilya Yashin, a fellow Moscow opposition politician who is serving a 15-day jail sentence for “discrediting” the Russian military, expressed "horror" at Gorinov's sentencing.

Russian human rights activist Marina Litvinovich decried the verdict, saying its primary aim is to intimidate Russia's civil servants into silence.

"Any junior representative of the authorities now understands that no words against the 'special operation' can be said, otherwise they'll get a demonstrative seven years in prison," Litvinovich wrote.

Russia passed a law in March that allows jail sentences of up to 15 years for spreading false information about the military.

Thousands of Russians have been fined, or face jail, for carrying out anti-war protests, or making anti-war statements since the invasion of Ukraine in late February.

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