

Kremlin Critic Pivovarov Sentenced to 4 Years in Prison for 'Undesirable' Activity

July 15, 2022



Andrei Pivovarov. **Anatoly Rodnikov / Kommersant**

Kremlin critic Andrei Pivovarov, the former head of pro-democracy group Open Russia, has been sentenced to four years in prison on charges of "undesirable" activities, his team [said](#) Friday.

Pivovarov, 40, has been in detention since May 2021, when he was removed from a Warsaw-bound plane by security services amid the country's wide-reaching crackdown on opposition voices.

A court in the southern city of Krasnodar found Pivovarov guilty of "carrying out the activities of an undesirable organization" and sentenced him to four years in a penal colony.

He is also banned from social and political activities for eight years.

Pivovarov denies any wrongdoing.

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Russia labeled Open Russia, a pro-democratic opposition movement established by exiled Kremlin critic Mikhail Khodorkovsky, “undesirable” in 2017. The tag outlaws the organization’s activities within Russia and subjects anyone working with it to criminal prosecution.

The movement's allies continued to operate under a separate legal entity until May 2021, when it disbanded in order to protect its members from future prosecution. Pivovarov was arrested days later.

Investigators claimed Pivovarov was still working with the group, which is now based in London, because of a series of Facebook posts in which he allegedly criticized Russia’s Federal Security Service (FSB) and supported opposition protesters.

“In short, he was imprisoned for reposting on Facebook and communicating with journalists,” Pivovarov’s team said.

Despite the charges, Pivovarov remained hopeful, maintaining that he remains a “free man.”

“I know that progress cannot be stopped, changes for the better are inevitable, and they are not far off,” he [said](#) in his final court statement.

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