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# Russian Court Drops Terrorism Charges Against Popular YouTuber

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Yuri Khovansky (C). **t.me/mariianel**

A St. Petersburg court has terminated the criminal terrorism case against a popular Russian YouTuber over an alleged performance mocking the deadly 2002 Moscow theater hostage crisis, the court system's press service announced Wednesday.

Yury Khovansky, 32, was charged with "public justification of terrorism" in June 2021 after video of a performance ironically approving the Oct. 2, 2002, attack on Moscow's Dubrovka Theater was leaked online.

Khovansky's lawyers insisted that the performance depicted in the video, prosecutors' key piece of evidence, took place in 2012, which meant that the case should be closed due to the expiration of the statute of limitations.

The St. Petersburg court on Wednesday sided with the defense and lifted all charges and restrictions imposed on Khovansky.

**Related article**: Russia Adds Popular YouTuber to 'Terrorist and Extremist' List

Khovansky's name is now expected to be removed from the government-maintained list of "extremists and terrorists," where it was placed during the investigative process.

If he had been found guilty, Khovansky would have faced up to seven years in prison on the charges.

In December 2021, the blogger was released from a detention center with a ban on certain activities.

The two-and-a-half day siege by a Chechen insurgent group on the Dubrovka Theater ended with Russian security services pumping toxic gas into the building in an attempt to knock the terrorists unconscious and free the hostages. About 130 of the hostages died from inhaling the chemical and all 40 attackers were killed in the rescue operation.

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