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Russia Fines Ex-State TV Producer for 'Discrediting' the Army

July 28, 2022



Marina Ovsyannikova. **Alexander Kazakov / Kommersant**

A former Russian state television producer has been fined on charges of "discrediting" the Russian military, the state-run RIA Novosti news agency reported Thursday.

Marina Ovsyannikova, 44, became famous for protesting the war in Ukraine on a live newscast by her former employer, Channel One, in March.

Prosecutors say the journalist "discredited" the Russian Armed Forces during the July 13 trial of opposition activist Ilya Yashin, where she and other journalists and activists had turned up in his support.

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Moscow's Meshchansky District Court ordered Ovsyannikova to pay 50,000 rubles ($816) in

fines for the administrative offense.

Ovsyannikova allegedly “discredited” the army during an interview she gave outside the court building, according to court proceedings seen by the SOTA Telegram news channel.

The clip used in proceedings was published by pro-government YouTube blogger Ilias Mercury, SOTA reported.

“I actively speak out against the war, I think it is the most horrific crime of the 21st century. I am firmly convinced that these criminals will be sitting on the defendants' dock at an international tribunal. What they are doing in Ukraine now is madness, it is an aggressive attempt at holding on to power. I am sure the good will win over the evil,” she says in a clip from the interview.

Ovsyannikova mentioned in the same interview that she has not paid the fine for her previous offense — the on-air protest — “out of principle,” as she is convinced the money from the fine would be used “to pay for the war.”

Russia passed the law against “discrediting” the military shortly after it sent troops into Ukraine. Since then, a growing number of people have been prosecuted under the law, which Kremlin critics say is an effort to stifle anti-war dissent.

Despite staging a number of anti-war protests, Ovsyannikova has not yet faced criminal prosecution in Russia.

She was briefly detained earlier this month just days after staging a solo anti-war protest outside the Kremlin.

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