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Ukraine Reduces Russian Soldier's Life Sentence to 15 Years

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Vadim Shishimarin in court. **Oleg Petrasyuk / EPA / TASS**

A Ukrainian court on Friday reduced to 15 years a life sentence handed down to a Russian soldier for pre-meditated murder in the country's first war crimes trial.

Vadim Shishimarin, 21, was sentenced to life in prison in May after being found guilty of fatally shooting a 62-year-old civilian in northeastern Ukraine in the early days of the war. His lawyer had vowed to appeal the verdict, arguing that "societal pressure" had influenced the verdict.

"According to the result of the appellate review, the appeal filed by the defense was partially satisfied," a statement on the Kyiv court of appeals' website said Friday.

The Russian soldier "was sentenced to 15 years of imprisonment," the court said.

Related article: Russian Soldier Receives Life Sentence in Ukraine Invasion's First War Crimes

Trial

Shishimarin, a native of Siberia's Irkutsk region, claimed he shot Ukrainian civilian Oleksandr Shelipov under pressure from another soldier as they tried to retreat and escape back into Russia from Ukraine's Sumy region.

In May, the Kremlin said it was unable to help Shishimarin.

"We have no way to protect his interests on the ground," President Vladimir Putin's spokesman Dmitry Peskov said, vowing to pursue "other channels."

The United Nations documented over 5,000 killings of civilians in Ukraine since the Kremlin launched the invasion in February.

Moscow denies targeting civilians and says it attacks military infrastructure in Ukraine.

AFP contributed reporting.

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