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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Russian Prosecutors Seek 24 Years in Jail for Journalist Accused of Treason

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Ivan Safronov in court. **Moscow City Court / Moskva News Agency**

Russian prosecutors asked Tuesday for Russian journalist Ivan Safronov to be sentenced to 24 years in jail on treason charges, his lawyer Yevgeny Smirnov said on Facebook.

The charges against Safronov date to when he was working for top Russian newspapers Vedomosti and Kommersant where he reported on the Russian defense industry.

"The prosecutors offered a 12-year sentence in exchange for a guilty plea," Smirnov said of the court hearing Tuesday. Safronov, 32, refused to take that deal.

Safronov denies accusations that he collected confidential information about Russia's military and handed it over to Western intelligence agents.

"I have been a journalist all my life and there has never been any espionage," Safronov said in a statement released earlier this month. His trial is taking place behind closed doors.

Investigative media outlet Proekt published court documents from Safronov's case Monday,

arguing that the “classified” information Safronov allegedly passed to the West is all publicly available online.

Safronov’s lawyers said Tuesday in a Telegram post that all witnesses for the prosecution admitted in court that Safronov “did not break the law and did not ferret out state secrets.”

Arrested in July 2020, Safronov has been in pre-trial custody ever since.

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