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Rogue Russian Priest Sentenced to 7 Years in Prison

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Pelagia Tikhonova / Moskva News Agency

A disgraced Russian monk who had barricaded himself inside his monastery with dozens of followers was sentenced to a total of seven years in prison on Friday.

Father Sergiy — whose secular name is Nikolai Romanov — was already serving a 3.5-year prison sentence for inciting suicide, offending religious beliefs and vigilantism.

Moscow's Babushkinsky District Court on Friday found him guilty of charges of inciting hatred, according to his lawyers.

Embed:

Video shared by the Ostorozhno Novosti Telegram news channel showed bailiffs placing the monk and his spokesman Vsevolod Moguchev inside a glass defendants' box.

Sporting a grey beard, a black robe and handcuffs, the defendant could be seen crossing

himself from inside the box.

Father Sergiy, a former policeman in the Soviet Union, rose to notoriety at the height of the Covid-19 pandemic after publicly denying the existence of the virus and calling on Russians to resist virus restrictions.

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Prosecutors have accused Father Sergiy of trying to encourage several nuns in his convent to commit suicide.

The Russian Orthodox Church excommunicated the monk in 2020.

But the priest refused to surrender the convent where he served in the Ural Mountains, leading Russian police to storm the convent and arrest him that year.

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