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Russian Opposition Journalist Jailed in Absentia for 'Fake' War Coverage

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Alexander Nevzorov. **Alexander Nevzorov / YouTube**

A Russian court sentenced a well-known exiled opposition journalist to prison Wednesday for "fake news" about the Russian military's deadly attacks on civilians in Ukraine.

Alexander Nevzorov, 64, was the first prominent political reporter and commentator to be charged in March 2022 under a newly adopted law banning what authorities deem to be false information about the war in Ukraine.

Investigators accused Nevzorov of publishing "deliberately false" information about Russia's shelling of a maternity hospital in Mariupol and the apparent massacre of civilians in Bucha last spring.

Russian officials deny targeting civilians in the Mariupol maternity hospital strike and have claimed without evidence that the Bucha massacre was staged following Russian forces' retreat from the area.

Moscow's Basmanny District Court found Nevzorov guilty and sentenced him to eight years in prison in absentia, according to lawyer Alexei Pryanishnikov.

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Prosecutors had requested a nine-year prison sentence for Nevzorov, a veteran journalist and a former member of parliament who was also declared a "foreign agent" in the spring of 2022.

The Basmanny District Court's sentence also bans Nevzorov from administering websites for the next four years.

The sentence enters into force the moment Nevzorov is extradited or detained on Russian soil.

Russian tabloids claimed early last summer that Nevzorov had moved with his wife to Italy, citing a leaked application for Ukrainian citizenship from Ukraine's Italian consulate.

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Nevzorov has said the criminal case against him was intended to send a warning signal to journalists in Russia.

Nevzorov is one of the scores of Russians, many of whom have fled the country, to have been charged under wartime censorship laws outlawing information about the military's actions abroad that does not follow the Kremlin's narrative.

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