

Russia Jails Blogger for 9 Years in Absentia for 'False Information' on War

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Veronika Belotserkovskaya. **Andrei Nikerichev / Moskva News Agency**

A court in Moscow sentenced one of the first people charged under Russia's wartime law against spreading "knowingly false information" to nine years in jail in absentia on Monday, the independent broadcaster Sota [reported](#).

Veronika Belotserkovskaya, a Ukrainian-born Russian journalist and the owner of a culinary school in France where she lives, was [among the first people to be charged with spreading "false information"](#) about the invasion of Ukraine after she posted on Instagram about Russia's shelling of a maternity hospital in the Ukrainian port city of Mariupol and the massacre of civilians by Russian forces in the Kyiv suburb of Bucha in March.

As well as her long jail sentence, the court banned Belotserkovskaya from running websites for a five-year period after her release.

As Belotserkovskaya was tried in absentia and lives in France, she is unlikely to have to serve her sentence.

Russia passed a law in March criminalizing the sharing of information about the “special military operation” in Ukraine that differed from the Kremlin’s narrative, and punishing those found guilty of doing so with sentences of up to 15 years.

Belotserkovskaya has already had properties she owns in Russia worth \$2.1 million [seized](#) by court order, was added to the Russian government's wanted list and declared a “foreign agent,” a label that carries strict financial and legal constraints.

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