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Russian Activist Sentenced to 8.5 Years for Anti-War Posts

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Gleb Schelkunov / Kommersant

A Moscow court has sentenced activist and student Dmitry Ivanov to 8.5 years in prison on charges of "spreading false information" about the Russian Armed Forces, the independent Mediazona news website reported Tuesday.

Ivanov, 23, the head of the Protesting MGU (Moscow State University) Telegram channel with over 9,000 subscribers, was arrested in June for his posts criticizing the Kremlin's invasion of Ukraine as well as alleged Russian atrocities in Ukraine's Bucha and Mariupol.

Ivanov initially served 25 days in jail as part of a different case, but was not released when his sentence was due to end.

Speaking in court ahead of Tuesday's verdict, Ivanov addressed the international community, saying that the world "must understand that Russia is not Putin."

"I know that tens of millions of people here in Russia are against this war," Ivanov told

reporters in English.

“This war is a tragedy for all Ukrainians but it is also a tragedy for Russians who want to live in peace with their neighbors,” Ivanov added.

Shortly after the start of the full-scale invasion of Ukraine, Russia introduced jail terms of up to 15 years for people who publish "knowingly false information" about the military that contradicts the Kremlin’s narrative of the war.

Since then, Russian authorities have opened at least 180 criminal cases for “spreading false information,” according to human rights lawyer Pavel Chikov.

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