

Student Expelled for Anti-War Stance Wins Payout From Russian University

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Andrei Kotenko. [kotennk / instagram](#)

A court in Russia's southwestern Kaluga region last week [ordered](#) a university in St. Petersburg to pay compensation to a student who was expelled for his anti-war stance, media outlet iStories [reported](#) on Tuesday, citing the student's lawyer.

Andrei Kotenko, a former journalism student at St. Petersburg University of the Humanities and Social Sciences (SPbGUP), was expelled from the university last September.

Though the university board cited Kotenko's bad academic performance as the formal grounds for his expulsion, the student and his lawyer Artem Klyga said the decision had obviously been linked to Kotenko's vocal opposition to the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

"He was active on Instagram writing anti-war posts," Klyga told iStories, adding that, "student representatives wrote to him asking to stop publishing things like that." Kotenko

had also been threatened with “repercussions” after he refused to attend “patriotic” events organized by the university, Klyga said.

Related article: [Russia’s Oldest University to Expel Students Detained at Anti-War Protests – Kommersant](#)

Kotenko told iStories that he had been one of the top students in his class prior to the war and never faced any difficulties with the university administration, but that the situation had changed dramatically after he chose to make his anti-war position public.

In addition to facing intimidation from the university staff in class and during the exams, Kotenko was summoned for a private meeting by the university administration where he was confronted with print-outs of his anti-war posts on Instagram.

“They printed every story, every post in color on A4 paper and asked me to comment on them,” the former student told iStories.

Last week’s ruling now requires the university to pay Kotenko 1.1 million rubles (\$14,368), which includes sums owned by the university under education and housing contracts, a fine for refusing an offer for a pre-trial settlement, and compensation of 15,000 rubles (\$195) for “moral damage.”

In March last year, two faculty members [resigned](#) from SPbGUP after the university’s administration forbade them to speak out against the war. Several students of the university were also expelled last year for joining anti-war protests.

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