

Moscow Court Jails Man for 7 Years for Condemning Russian Atrocities in Ukraine

March 30, 2023



Mikhail Simonov in court. **Sota**

A Moscow court on Thursday [sentenced](#) a rail worker to seven years in jail for online posts denouncing the Russian bombing of Ukrainian cities.

Mikhail Simonov, 63, was detained in the fall for publishing anti-war comments on the Russian social network VKontakte in March.

“While killing children and women, we sing songs on Channel One [state TV],” Simonov wrote. “We, Russia, have become godless. Forgive us, Lord!”

Simonov also captioned a photo showing the ruins of the Mariupol Drama Theater with the phrase “Russian pilots are bombing children.”

Moscow’s Timiryazevsky District Court found him guilty of spreading “fake news” about the Russian military, independent Russian media outlet Mediazona reported.

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Investigators claimed that Simonov acted out of “political hatred” toward Russia’s leadership and its “decision to use the Russian Armed Forces to normalize the social and political situation in Ukraine.”

Last year, Russia criminalized the spread of information about the country’s military that deviates from the Kremlin’s narrative on what it calls its “special military operation” in Ukraine.

While the new law introduced jail terms of up to 15 years for the publication of "knowingly false information" about the army, the judge in Thursday’s hearing handed Simonov a more lenient seven-year prison sentence.

Simonov’s defense maintained that he was expressing pacifist convictions as a Christian.

More than [500 people](#) in Russia have faced criminal charges for making anti-war statements since Moscow launched its invasion of Ukraine, according to the human rights watchdog OVD-Info.

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