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Russia Sentences Ex-Officers to 19 Years Over Anti-Mobilization Arson Attack

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Former security service officers Roman Nasryev, left, and Alexei Nuriev, right. **Alexei Gavriliuk / TASS**

A Russian court has sentenced a former security service officer and a former emergencies officer to 19 years in prison each for setting fire to a city administration building last fall, Russian media reported Monday.

Roman Nasryev, a former driver for the Russian National Guard (Rosgvardia), and Alexei Nuriev, an officer in the Emergency Situations Ministry, were found guilty of conspiracy to commit arson "in order to destabilize the activities of government bodies" and "training for the purpose of carrying out terrorist activities."

On Oct. 11, 2022, the two men threw a Molotov cocktail into an administrative building in the Chelyabinsk region town of Bakal in protest of the war in Ukraine and Russia's "partial" mobilization.

The city administration building houses a military enlistment office.

The two men were detained by Federal Security Service (FSB) officers shortly after setting fire to the building, and a security guard managed to quickly extinguish the fire.

Related article: Russian Man Imprisoned for 'Terrorist' Military Enlistment Arson Attack

According to Russian law enforcement, the two men are members of "several dozen leftist and ultra-right online communities, including those with a pro-Ukrainian nationalist orientation."

During the two men's trial, an employee at the Bakal enlistment office said the fire started by the Molotov cocktail could have burned the records of some 4,000 individuals, which would have paralyzed the mobilization efforts of local authorities.

State prosecutors had requested the lengthy 19-year prison sentence for Nasryev and Nuriev on Friday.

A Yekaterinburg court upheld this request in its sentencing Monday, ordering them to an initial four years in prison followed by an additional 15 years in a maximum-security correctional facility.

Solidarity Zone, a civil rights organization that helped defend the two men in court, suggested that the unusually harsh sentences may be because both defendants previously worked for the Russian security and emergency services.

In January, Russia issued its first prison sentence on terrorism charges for an arson attack on a military recruitment office.

The sentences for Nasryev and Nuriev were the longest to be handed down yet over an attack on a military recruitment office since the start of the war in Ukraine, the state-run TASS news agency reported.

Scores of military recruitment offices have been subjected to arson attacks across Russia since the start of the war on Feb. 24, 2022.

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