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Woman Fined for 'Discrediting' Army After Row in Moscow Coffee Shop

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Sofia Sandurskaya / Moskva News Agency

A Moscow resident was fined for "discrediting" the Russian army after she defended Ukrainians in an argument that unfolded in front of customers at a Moscow coffee shop, human rights watchdog OVD-Info reported Friday.

The woman, who requested anonymity to speak freely, related going to her favorite coffee shop one day in March to find another customer "arguing loudly," using offensive slurs about Ukrainians and saying that they "should be driven out."

"I made a comment ... because ... many of us have family and friends living in Ukraine. He was also in a public space where you shouldn't make remarks like that," the woman told OVD-Info.

Aggravated, the man chose to continue the argument and also began filming the woman with his phone.

“I also wanted to film him, but he started telling me that he works in law enforcement and mustn’t be filmed. He [then] took my phone and grabbed me by my hand. After that he called the police,” she told OVD-Info.

The police took the woman to a police station where officers studied her social media and advised her to keep such conversations confined to “her kitchen.”

The resulting case made against the woman was for an Instagram post she made about mobilization, which was supplied to the police by the man from the cafe.

The woman was found to have “discredited” the Russian armed forces and ordered to pay a fine of 30,000 rubles ($366).

“Of course, I don’t go to my favorite coffee shop anymore,” she told OVD-Info

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