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Russian Court Rejects Jailed Kremlin Critic Yashin Appeal

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Russian opposition politician Ilya Yashin. **Sergei Fadeichev / TASS**

The Moscow City Court dismissed Wednesday an appeal against jailed Kremlin critic Ilya Yashin's eight-and-a-half prison sentence handed down last year under Russia's wartime censorship laws.

Yashin, 39, was convicted in December for spreading "false" information about the Russian military's alleged killing of civilians in the Kyiv suburb town of Bucha last spring.

Ahead of the ruling, Yashin told the court that: "I've met many murderers, rapists and robbers in jail who received lesser sentences for their crimes," according to the independent news site Mediazona.

Yashin is one of hundreds of anti-war figures to face lengthy prison terms after Russia passed legislation punishing any criticism of the invasion of Ukraine.

"This law is null and void, and is unconstitutional," Yashin said at the appeal hearing. "In

effect, it introduces an unlawful ban on public disagreement with the Russian officials' position regarding the war that President Putin unleashed against Ukraine."

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The confirmation of Yashin's sentence means he will shortly be moved from pre-trial detention to a penal colony.

Yashin, who attended his appeal hearing via video link from a prison cell, had his audio feed cut off immediately after the verdict, Mediazona reported.

The outlet added that Yashin was seen laughing and displaying heart-shaped gestures on video.

Speaking before the judge's decision, Yashin invoked the "relentless pendulum of history" in what he said was his confidence that Russia has a promising post-war future.

"I will become one of those who will build a new free and happy Russia on the ruins of Putinism," he said.

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