

Suspended Sentence for Alleged Wagner Deserter in Oslo

By [AFP](#)

April 27, 2023



Andrei Medvedev (R), claiming to have deserted Russian mercenary group Wagner, and his lawyer Brynjulf Risnes speak before the start of his trial at the District Court in Oslo. **Gorm Kallestad / NTB / AFP**

A Russian man claiming to be a deserter from the Kremlin-linked Wagner mercenary group was handed a 14-day suspended sentence on Thursday for a street fight in central Oslo.

Oslo's district court however acquitted Andrei Medvedev, 26, of the more serious charge of assaulting police officers.

Appearing in court on Tuesday, Medvedev pleaded guilty to participating in a brawl outside an Oslo bar and resisting arrest in February, and carrying an air gun three weeks later.

"I'm very ashamed," he told the court.

He had rejected the charge of assaulting police officers — whom he kicked when he was

brought to the police station, according to the prosecution — an offense that carries a sentence of up to three years in prison.

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The three judges ruled unanimously that the prosecution had not provided enough evidence to convict Medvedev of the charge.

The prosecutor had called for Medvedev to serve 18 days behind bars.

"Very pleased with the verdict which is in line with what we said in court," Medvedev's lawyer Brynjulf Risnes told AFP in a text message.

"He won't have to serve time in prison and can focus on what brought him here: to speak out about the war in Ukraine."

Medvedev claims to have fought in Ukraine as a member of Wagner for four months before deserting in November when the group allegedly extended his contract against his will.

A potentially valuable witness in shedding light on the group's reported brutality in Ukraine, Medvedev has been questioned by Norwegian authorities since arriving in the country.

He has sought asylum in Norway but has been a headache for authorities since his arrival in mid-January.

Many questions remain about Medvedev's past and the circumstances of his escape from Russia.

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