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Moscow Baker Fined Over Anti-War Cakes

April 28, 2023

bakery_xoxo / instagram

Updated to add guilty verdict and fine.

A Moscow baker has been fined for "discrediting" the Russian military's actions in Ukraine with anti-war cakes, independent media reported Friday.

Anastasia Chernysheva started posting photos of her confectionary creations decorated with anti-war slogans on her bakery's Instagram in April 2022, two months into Russia's invasion.

"F*ck war," reads the icing on one of Bakery XOXO's phallic-shaped anti-war cakes. Another cake is decorated in the blue-and-yellow colors of the Ukrainian flag.

Police detained Chernysheva on Thursday afternoon, the police monitoring website OVD-Info reported, citing her lawyer Yulia Yevdokimova.

Embed:

View this post on Instagram

A post shared by хлеб и зрелища | торты в москве (@bakery_xoxo)

She was released that evening after being charged with “discrediting” the military, a crime introduced last year as Russia effectively muzzled public opposition to the war with draconian wartime censorship laws.

On Friday, Moscow's Izmailovsky District Court found her guilty and ordered her to pay a fine of 35,000 rubles ($440), OVD-Info said.

She faced a maximum fine of up to 50,000 rubles ($628) on the charges of “discrediting” the Russian Armed Forces’ actions in Ukraine.

Chernysheva told the Novaya Gazeta Europe news website that she does not plan to appeal the fine and that the punishment hadn't come as a surprise.

“I had several waves of pro-Russian comments saying that I belong in prison. At first I laughed it off ... But at some point I thought that, indeed, they would come for me because of the cakes, and then I would act according to the circumstances. And so, they came,” Chernysheva said.

If she is fined a second time, she faces the risk of criminal prosecution and jail.

In addition to making made-to-order cakes with anti-war slogans, pop culture memes and whimsical cartoons, Chernysheva has auctioned off some of her cakes for charity causes, with proceeds supporting opposition politician Yevgeny Roizman and the Nasiliu.net anti-domestic violence NGO.

Her case is the latest in a series of seemingly out-of-left-field cases against the creative ways anti-war Russians are expressing their views.

Last month, a regional deputy was fined for “discrediting” the Russian military after a video went viral showing him watching President Vladimir Putin’s state-of-the-nation address with noodles hanging from his ears.

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