

Russian Media Publisher Sentenced to 8 Years in Absentia Over Bucha Comments

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Ilya Krasilshchik **Beat Film Festival / Facebook**

Russian media publisher Ilya Krasilshchik has been sentenced to eight years in prison in absentia over his comments criticizing Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the independent Mediazona news website [reported](#) Thursday.

Krasilshchik, 36, was charged in April 2022 with “spreading fake news about the Russian military motivated by political hatred” over statements about the alleged massacre of civilians in Bucha, Ukraine by Russian troops.

Moscow's Basmanny District Court found him guilty of the charges and sentenced him to eight years in a penal colony in absentia.

In his final word in court, which he published on Facebook, he wrote:

“There is no logic in what is happening, so let's not pretend. The courts don't decide anything, the laws don't mean anything, I'm not here at all.

“Since there is no logic and sense, then my wish is appropriate: I ask you to replace my punishment with a trip to the village of Lyudenevichi, Gomel region, Belarus. This is the former town which all my family on my father's side came from. Those who did not come out in 1941 were destroyed, the whole family, more than 10 people. They were killed by real fascists, not fictional ones.”

The court also banned him from administering websites for four years.

Responding to the sentence on Twitter, Krasilshchik [said](#) he “will now have four years of excuses for why I’m not answering messages.”

State prosecutors had [requested](#) a sentence of nine years.

Krasilshchik has been the publisher of the independent Meduza news website, editor-in-chief of the Afisha.ru news website and head of the Yandex Lavka grocery delivery service.

He left Russia following the February 2022 invasion of Ukraine and launched Helpdesk Media, which provides information and assistance to people impacted by the war.

He wrote a [column](#) for The New York Times in March 2022 entitled "Russians Must Accept the Truth. We Failed."

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