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Russia Seeks New Trial for Man Who Criticized Child's Pro-War Hat

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A souvenir shop on Arbat Street in Moscow. **Valery Sharifulin / TASS**

Russian authorities will seek a new trial for a man who criticized a child for wearing a pro-war hat following an outcry from Russia's community of staunch war supporters, prosecutors said Thursday.

A court in the Ural Mountains city of Yekaterinburg in June fined Alexander Neustroyev 7,000 rubles ($70) on charges of "hooliganism" as part of a court-ordered settlement instead of a criminal conviction.

Neustroyev, 57, was accused in April of telling an 11-year-old boy, who wore a hat with the militarist Z symbol, to “shove the hat up your a**, moron.”

The Russian Prosecutor General’s Office said it plans to urge a higher court to review the Yekaterinburg court's verdict following criticism by pro-war figures, including federal lawmaker Alexander Khinshtein and Yekaterinburg Mayor Alexei Orlov.

“The criminal case could not be terminated,” the prosecutor’s office said in a statement.

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It argued that the committed crime was “cynical and directed not only against the schoolboy, but also caused damage to the social and moral education of the younger generation and Russia’s interests,”

Before issuing the 7,000 ruble fine, Russia’s Interior Ministry published Neustroyev’s videotaped apology following his arrest.

The 11-year-old boy, whose father is reportedly a veteran of Russia’s 17-month war in Ukraine, was given an award by local authorities and offered to speak to other schoolchildren about the aims of Russia’s invasion.

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