

Russia Fines Pro-War Ex-Military Intelligence Officer for 'Discrediting' Army

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Colonel Vladimir Kvachkov. **Vladimir Andreyev / URA.RU / TASS**

A former Russian military intelligence officer known for publicly endorsing Moscow's invasion of Ukraine has been fined for "discrediting" the country's armed forces, the independent news website Mediazona [reported](#) Tuesday.

The case against ex-GRU colonel Vladimir Kvachkov, 74, stands out as a rare example of Russia's justice system targeting pro-war figures instead of dissenters who oppose the conflict.

While he supports the invasion, Mediazona notes that Kvachkov has regularly [criticized](#) Russia's leaders for limiting the campaign to a "special military operation" instead of declaring an all-out war against Ukraine.

"Accusing me, a Russian officer, of discrediting the armed forces is insulting to me,"

Kvachkov said in a closing statement to the court, according to Mediazona.

“The armed forces are discredited by those who cannot wage war,” he added. “In my opinion, the following citizens discredit the armed forces: [President Vladimir] Putin, [Defense Minister Sergei] Shoigu, [Chief of General Staff Valery] Gerasimov.”

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Kvachkov, who retired in the late 1990s, was charged over social media posts that he said were written by someone else posing as him. The retired officer denies having any social media presence.

“I have nothing to do with that group in Odnoklassniki,” Kvachkov said, referring to the popular Russian social network. “This is fiction, lies and slander against me.”

Moscow’s Tverskoy District Court found Kvachkov guilty of “discrediting” Russia's armed forces and fined him 40,000 rubles (\$400), Mediazona reported.

Russia's media watchdog Roskomnadzor has meanwhile vowed to consider Kvachkov’s libel case surrounding the Odnoklassniki group set up in his name on Sept. 5, according to Mediazona.

In 2008, Kvachkov was [acquitted](#) by a jury for trying to kill Anatoly Chubais, the architect of Russia's privatization reforms in the 1990s

He was arrested again on suspicion of plotting a coup and [sentenced](#) in 2013 to several years in prison.

In 2017, Kvachkov was [sentenced](#) to an additional 1.5 years on charges of inciting hatred for criticizing Russian authorities in a video address filmed inside a prison.

Russia has launched thousands of misdemeanor cases for “discrediting” the Russian army since lawmakers passed wartime censorship laws days after Moscow's troops rolled into Ukraine in early 2022.

Repeat offenders risk being jailed for up to five years while those convicted of “spreading false information” — another wartime censorship law — face up to 15 years in prison.

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