

Moscow-Installed Court Jails Ukrainian Soldier 22 Years for Killing Civilian

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The wreckage of a tank on a street in Mariupol. **Vladimir Gerdo / TASS**

Updated with second court conviction against Vitaly Prokopchuk.

A court in Russian-controlled eastern Ukraine has sentenced a Ukrainian soldier to more than two decades in prison for killing a civilian in the occupied city of Mariupol, Russian authorities [announced](#) Monday.

Gunner Maxim Ovcharenko and two of his unidentified fellow soldiers were accused of shooting a Mariupol resident in April 2022, according to Russia's Investigative Committee.

Russian forces captured Mariupol the following month after a destructive siege that left the port city in ruins.

“[Ovcharenko and the accomplices] fired several shots at the victim, acting as part of an organized group, motivated by political and ideological hatred toward the victim,” Russia's Investigative Committee, which probes major crimes, said in a statement.

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The act was said to have been committed on orders from an unnamed Ukrainian commander, who according to the Investigative Committee used the call sign “SP.”

Ovcharenko was identified as a member of Ukraine’s Special Operations Command, 74th Separate Reconnaissance Battalion.

The Supreme Court of the self-proclaimed Donetsk People’s Republic found Ovcharenko guilty and sentenced him to 22 years in maximum-security prison.

Later on Monday, the same court sentenced another Ukrainian soldier, Naval Forces reconnaissance operator Vitaly Prokopchuk, to 25 years in a maximum-security prison on charges of shooting three Mariupol residents in March-April 2022, [according](#) to the Russian Prosecutor General’s Office.

Kyiv, which is itself investigating war crimes committed during Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, has not yet commented on the sentencing.

Human rights groups have [decried](#) criminal trials in Donetsk against Mariupol’s Ukrainian defenders, who have been [exchanged](#) for dozens of Russian prisoners.

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