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Russia Upholds 7-Year Sentence for Opposition Activist

By AFP

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Opposition activist Mikhail Krieger. **Mikhail Metzel / TASS**

A Russian court on Tuesday rejected an appeal by an opposition activist who was sentenced to seven years in prison over social media posts that prosecutors said "justified terrorism."

Russia has banned criticism of its military campaign and has orchestrated a huge crackdown on dissent as troops fight in Ukraine.

The activist, 63-year-old Mikhail Krieger, was sentenced in May on charges of "justifying terrorism" and "inciting hatred."

The charges were brought over Facebook posts from 2019 and 2020, in which Krieger said President Vladimir Putin should be "hanged" and praised men who had attacked Federal Security Service (FSB) officers as "heroes."

At the hearing Tuesday, he denounced the Kremlin's Ukraine offensive and — according to

the rights group Memorial — shouted "Glory to Ukraine!"

Related article: Opposition Activist Mikhail Krieger's Final Statement to Russian Court

His appeal was rejected by a Russian military appeals court in the town of Vlasikha, a closed military city 20 kilometers (12 miles) west of Moscow, Memorial said on social media.

Krieger spoke to the court via video link from a Moscow prison.

Krieger's supporters published a photo of him smiling, dressed in dark trousers and a dark top in a small cell.

He was working as a delivery man when he was arrested in November last year, near a restaurant as he completed a delivery, according to Memorial's website.

During his trial, he refused to apologize for his posts and said he was being "persecuted" for his "anti-war and openly pro-Ukrainian position."

As he was sentenced in May, he sang a Ukrainian folk song, "Chervona Kalyna" (Red Viburnum), that has become a symbol of resistance against Moscow.

Russia has launched more than 700 criminal cases against its citizens for speaking out against the Ukraine assault, according to the OVD-Info rights group.

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