The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Russian Doctors Call for Release of Supermarket Protestor

By AFP

November 18, 2023



AP/TASS/Dmitri Lovetsky

More than 100 Russian doctors have signed an open letter to President Vladimir Putin calling for the release a woman jailed for making a supermarket protest over Russia's offensive against Ukraine.

A St. Petersburg court last week sentenced Alexandra Skochilenko, 33, to seven years in prison for spreading "false information." She had swapped supermarket price tags with slogans criticizing Russia's offensive in Ukraine.

Skochilenko, an artist known as Sasha, suffers from health issues, including coeliac disease and a congenital heart defect. Her mother recently told AFP that a long prison term would be a "catastrophe."

"As the medical community, we have serious concerns about Sasha's health," stated the

letter, published on social media and by independent Russian news sites Saturday.

"She has been diagnosed with a number of serious chronic diseases that require proper medical supervision and a special dietary regime. Staying in the (prison) colony could lead to a significant deterioration of Sasha's health," it added.

Her sentencing last week has been widely criticized by rights groups and anti-Kremlin campaigners.

Related article: ‘I Just Wanted to Stop the War’: Russian Artist Sentenced to 7 Years for Price Tag Protest

Last March, Skochilenko replaced price tags with messages that included claims about a Russian strike on a theater in Mariupol that was reported to have left hundreds dead.

"The cost of this war is the life of our children," another sticker said.

Russia has mounted a crackdown on dissidents since it launched its full-scale military offensive against Ukraine in February 2022.

Skochilenko was prosecuted under sweeping new censorship laws that have been used to target Russians spreading information about the campaign that goes against the Kremlin's official narrative.

The letter to Putin was organized by Alexander Vanyukov, a surgeon who wrote a similar petition this year calling for proper medical aid to be given to imprisoned opposition leader Alexei Navalny.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2023/11/18/russian-doctors-call-for-release-of-supermarket-protestor-a83151