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Russian Singer Who Burned Passport Seeks Repentance From Orthodox Leader

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Eduard Sharlot at the Samara region's Kirovsky District Court. **Albert Dzen / TASS**

A Russian singer who is on trial for posting anti-war videos on Instagram has sought repentance in a letter to Russia's Orthodox Church leader and vowed to devote his career to patriotism.

Eduard Sharlot was detained in November after returning to Russia from Armenia, where he had posted videos of himself burning his passport and nailing Patriarch Kirill's portrait to a cross in opposition to Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Authorities on Dec. 2 placed Sharlot in pre-trial detention on charges of justifying Nazism and insulting religious believers' feelings. The singer faces up to six years in prison if found guilty.

His father Valery Sharlot told the RBC news website Tuesday that his son wrote a letter of repentance to Patriarch Kirill before the New Year holidays.

“My son has acknowledged his guilt, admitted that he committed a mistake and — given his faith — expressed heartfelt apologies to the patriarch,” the father was quoted as saying.

Related article: Russia Detains Passport-Burning Singer Upon Arrival in St. Petersburg

According to the Telegram news channel Baza, which also cites the letter to Patriarch Kirill, Sharlot wrote that he is “actively writing patriotic compositions and is ready to perform them” once released.

On Wednesday, Sharlot appeared in court via video link in the central Russian city of Samara, where he issued another public apology to Patriarch Kirill and President Vladimir Putin, as well as to other Kremlin-aligned figures.

“Putin is a real man,” Sharlot said, according to the broadcaster RTVI. “You are everlasting and omnipresent... Vladimir Vladimirovich, forgive me.”

Additionally, Sharlot claimed to have been “dazed by American propaganda” when deciding to burn his passport on camera.

“I was a lost man,” he told the judge. “The one and a half months spent in jail have completely cooled my excitement.”

The court rejected Sharlot’s appeal and ruled to keep him in custody until Jan. 24.

Shortly after detaining him, police recorded a video in which Sharlot apologized for burning his passport and claimed that he had been misled with “false information.”

A court in November jailed the singer for 13 on administrative charges of profanity and harassment.

Pro-Kremlin activists filed complaints to the authorities accusing Sharlot of “publicly discrediting the Russian army, offending religious feelings and deliberately burning the passport of a Russian citizen.”

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