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Russia Jails Man 8 Years for Draft Office Arson Plot

By AFP

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Maxim Asriyan. **t.me/SPbGS**

A military court in Saint Petersburg sentenced a Russian man to eight years on terrorism and treason charges for plotting to burn down an army recruitment building in 2022.

Russia saw a spate of attacks on draft offices in the fall of 2022 after President Vladimir Putin announced a "partial" mobilization drive, calling up some 300,000 men to fight in Ukraine.

The court said Maxim Asriyan, a nurse who worked in Saint Petersburg, planned to throw a homemade Molotov cocktail at a military enlistment building in the city but changed his mind at the last minute.

In a statement, the court said Asriyan was motivated by "extremist views" and was a supporter of the Ukrainian armed forces.

He struck a plea deal, admitting that he took a Molotov cocktail to the building in the early

hours of Oct. 1, 2022, but did not go through with the attack.

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Asriyan will serve two-and-a-half years in prison, with the rest of his eight-year sentence being spent in a maximum security penal colony, the court said.

Prosecutors claimed he backed down from his arson plan after he saw a heavy security presence and feared he would be caught or identified.

Asriyan said he changed his mind on the spot because he did not want to hurt people working in the building, according to the AvtoZak Live media outlet, which tracks Russia's judicial system.

He was convicted on terrorism and treason charges — laws widely used by Russian prosecutors to target those who have protested its invasion of Ukraine.

Putin's "partial" mobilization order triggered hundreds of thousands of young Russian men to flee the country to avoid being called up to fight in Ukraine.

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