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In First, Russian Stands Trial for Displaying 'Extremist' Rainbow Flag

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Inna Mosina. **Inna Mosina Photography / Facebook**

A Russian photographer went on trial Tuesday for posting a rainbow flag online, marking the first case of a person being charged for displaying the LGBT symbol since Russia banned the so-called "international LGBT public movement" as an "extremist" organization.

Russia's Supreme Court in November outlawed the "international LGBT movement," with individuals facing up to six years in prison if convicted of involvement.

Earlier this month, media outlets published the full text of the Supreme Court ruling, which describes the six-color gay pride flag as an "extremist symbol."

The document was attached to a misdemeanor case involving "the display of extremist symbols" in the southwestern Russian city of Saratov, according to the local news website FreeNews-Volga.

Related article: Russia Labels LGBT Community 'Extremist' in Prelude to Sweeping Crackdown

The independent news website Mediazona identified the defendant as 33-year-old photographer Inna Mosina, who had allegedly posted a rainbow flag on her Instagram page a month before the Supreme Court ruling went into force.

Mosina told Saratov's Leninsky District Court on Tuesday that the rainbow flags on her Instagram page are "creative solutions" and do not represent LGBTQ+ symbols, according to Mediazona.

Mosina faces up to 15 days in prison or a fine of up to 2,000 rubles ($22) if found guilty of "displaying extremist symbols," according to the human rights group Pervyi Otdel, whose lawyers represent her in court.

Perviy Otdel argued that the case against Mosina violates Russia's Constitution, which guarantees freedom of opinion.

Mosina's court hearing was adjourned until Feb. 5, when the judge is expected to question the police officer who opened the country's first case for the "display of extremist symbols," according to Mediazona.

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