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Russian Student Jailed 9 Years for Secession Calls, Promoting Ukrainian Army

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Andrei Vasyurenko. **Social media**

A St. Petersburg military court on Wednesday sentenced a university student to nine years in prison for making public calls to join the Ukrainian army and for his native republic of Karelia to secede from Russia.

Andrei Vasyurenko, 19, was detained in March on charges of "planning to commit high treason by defecting to the enemy's side," the RBC news outlet reported at the time, noting that his attempts were unsuccessful.

Vasyurenko was described as a "nationalist" who had campaigned for the northwestern republic of Karelia's secession.

The First Western District Military Court on Wednesday found Vasyurenko guilty of the charges and handed him a nine-year prison sentence.

Vasyurenko's trial was held behind closed doors, the St. Petersburg court system added in a statement on the messaging app Telegram, which noted that he had pleaded guilty.

In April, Russia added Vasyurenko to its list of "terrorists and extremists," a designation allowing authorities to freeze his bank accounts.

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