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Russia Overturns Afghan Journalist's Deportation Order

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RusNews / Telegram

A Russian court has overturned orders to deport Afghan journalist and activist Kobra Hassani, who feared for her life under the Taliban's rule.

Hassani, 27, was among a group of 12 Afghan nationals who were detained near a St. Petersburg port in May 2022 on suspicion of attempting to illegally flee to Europe.

On Tuesday, a St. Petersburg court sentenced Hassani and 11 other Afghan men to two years in prison for illegally crossing the Russian border. The time they had served in pre-trial custody was credited toward their sentence, which the court ruled to be fully served.

The sentence had fueled fears that Hassani, who had covered women's rights on Afghan television, would be imprisoned and tortured if deported from Russia to Afghanistan.

Russian authorities last month rejected Hassani's asylum request.

St. Petersburg's Krasnoselsky District Court on Wednesday dismissed the bailiff's motion to

extend Hassani’s detention in an immigration facility.

It also granted the defense’s motion to release Hassani from custody and not deport her from Russia because she is under travel restrictions.

“Her forced deportation from Russia is impossible and Hassani’s prolonged custody in the temporary detention center… excessively restricts her rights and freedoms,” the St. Petersburg court system’s Telegram channel said.

Hassani escaped the Taliban through Tajikistan and initially settled in Kyiv after the Islamic fundamentalist group came to power in Afghanistan in 2021.

Hassani attempted to flee to Poland after Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine, but she was instead taken to Russian-controlled Ukraine and then to Moscow through various intermediaries.

Russia has banned the Taliban as a terrorist organization but has hosted it in Moscow for security talks despite ideological and historical rifts.

Russia had fought against Islamist rebel militants for much of the 1980s during the Soviet-Afghan war.

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