

Russia Arrests Economist Konstantin Sonin, Politician Leonid Gozman in Absentia

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Leonid Gozman and Konstantin Sonin. **A.Savin; Alexander Avilov / Moskva News Agency**

A Moscow court has ordered the arrest in absentia of economist Konstantin Sonin and liberal opposition politician Leonid Gozman over their criticism of Russia's invasion of Ukraine on social media, state news agencies [reported](#) Tuesday.

Authorities charged Sonin, who currently works at the University of Chicago's Harris School of Public Policy, with spreading "fake news" about the Russian army.

The case against Sonin is linked to a post in which he referenced statements made by jailed opposition politician Ilya Yashin, the economist said on social media Tuesday.

"Now that [Alexei] Navalny is killed in prison on Putin's orders, Ilya is the bravest person that I know. I am proud that my 'crime' in Putin's court is a post on Ilya's words about Bucha," Sonin [wrote](#) on X (formerly Twitter).

Embed:

From his prison cell, [@IlyaYashin](#) calls Putin what he is, a criminal gang leader, not a statesman. Now that [@navalny](#) is killed in prison on Putin's orders, Ilya is the bravest person that I know. I am proud that my "crime" in Putin's court is a post on Ilya's words about Bucha. <https://t.co/Z3j5yILBzZ>

— Konstantin Sonin (@k_sonin) [February 20, 2024](#)

Gozman, meanwhile, faces a more severe punishment under the same Criminal Code article, with Russian officials claiming his social media post contained traces of “hatred or enmity towards a social group,” [according](#) to the state-run Interfax news agency.

A veteran opposition politician, Gozman fled Russia to Israel in 2022 after being arrested twice on accusations of “public comparisons between the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany.”

The “army fakes” case against him is connected to unspecified Facebook and Telegram posts “about the Russian leadership and the Russian army,” [according](#) to TASS.

Moscow’s Gagarinsky District Court ruled to place both men under arrest for two months if authorities manage to secure their extradition to Russia.

If found guilty, Sonin, 51, and Gozman, 73, face up to five and 10 years in prison respectively.

Both men are also featured on Russia’s Justice Ministry’s “foreign agents” list.

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