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Jailed Human Rights Activist Orlov Offered to Fight in Ukraine

March 15, 2024



Russian human rights activist Oleg Orlov. **Sergei Karpukhin / TASS**

Russian prison authorities tried to recruit jailed human rights campaigner Oleg Orlov for the war in Ukraine despite his pacifist views, the Memorial human rights group said Friday.

A Moscow court sentenced Orlov to two-and-a-half years in prison in late February for speaking out against the war in Ukraine and "discrediting" the Russian military.

Memorial said the 70-year-old was transferred on Monday to a Moscow detention facility, where he was "almost immediately" offered to sign a contract with Russia's Defense Ministry.

"Oleg Petrovich laughed and asked whether they were bothered by his age," Memorial said in a post on the messaging app Telegram.

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"They [the authorities] replied that nothing bothers them," the rights group said, adding that

Orlov then declined to sign the contract.

Orlov serves as co-chair of Memorial, which won the 2022 Nobel Peace Prize.

He is one of the few prominent anti-war figures who have stayed in Russia since the 2022 invasion of Ukraine, while other critics now live in exile.

Orlov was sentenced after prosecutors sought a retrial of his previous verdict and requested he be jailed.

He was fined in October for "discrediting" the army before prosecutors appealed the sentence.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2024/03/15/jailed-human-rights-activist-orlov-offered-to-fight-in-ukraine-a84474