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Russian Filmmaker Gets 3 Years in Prison for Ukraine Posts

By AFP

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The bodies of executed civilians line Yablunska Street in the town of Bucha, northwest of Kyiv, following the withdrawal of Russian troops on April 2, 2022. **Ronaldo Schemidt / AFP**

A Russian filmmaker who criticized the Kremlin's military offensive in Ukraine on social media has been sentenced to three years in prison, a St. Petersburg court said Wednesday.

Russia made opposition to what it calls its "special military operation" illegal shortly after it sent troops into Ukraine in February 2022, and thousands of people have been detained for simple acts of protest.

Vsevolod Korolyov, 36, had been in pre-trial detention since July 2022 on suspicion of "knowingly spreading false information about Russia's armed forces."

St. Petersburg's Vyborgsky District Court found him guilty of making "untrue" posts on the VKontakte social network in spring 2022 "about the massacres of civilians in Bucha and

Borodianka, as well as the shelling of Donetsk."

"The court imposed a sentence of three years' imprisonment in a general regime penal colony," it said, adding that he had been restricted from using the internet for four years.

Prosecutors had requested he be jailed for nine years.

Under Russian law, information about Ukraine that does not come from an official government source can be deemed "false" and its dissemination is liable to criminal prosecution.

Korolyov's sentence comes a day after a court in Russia's southern region of Volgograd handed a local resident five years in prison for the same offense.

Since launching its offensive in Ukraine, Moscow has waged an unprecedented crackdown on dissent that rights groups have likened to the mass repression seen under the Soviet Union.

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