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# St. Petersburg Woman Arrested for Writing 'No to War' on Voting Ballot

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**Pelagia Tikhonova / Moskva News Agency**

A St. Petersburg court has ordered the arrest of a woman who wrote "no to war" on her voting ballot in Russia's 2024 presidential election, the court's press service said Wednesday.

Alexandra Chiryatyeva was accused of writing the anti-war message on her ballot during the last day of voting on Sunday, which saw President Vladimir Putin secure a fifth term in the Kremlin despite an uneven political playing field and widespread reports of fraud.

"Chiryatyeva thus ruined state property and discredited the Russian armed forces," the St. Petersburg court system said in a statement.

On Sunday, thousands of Russians heeded the late opposition activist Alexei Navalny's call to form long lines at polling stations in a show of opposition to Putin and the war in Ukraine.

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Chiryatyeva accused a police officer stationed at the polling place where she voted of violating her right to ballot secrecy and preventing her from casting her vote, the rights watchdog OVD-Info reported.

St. Petersburg's Dzerzhinsky District Court on Tuesday found Chiryatyeva guilty of petty hooliganism and ordered her to be placed under arrest for eight days.

The court also found Chiryatyeva guilty of "discrediting the Russian army" and fined her 40,000 rubles ($430).

Russia has launched thousands of misdemeanor cases for "discrediting" the Russian army since lawmakers passed wartime censorship laws days after Moscow launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

Repeat offenders risk being jailed for up to five years, while those convicted of "spreading false information" — another wartime censorship law — face up to 15 years in prison.

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