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St. Petersburg Court Charges Son of Anti-War Candidate With 'Discrediting' Army

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Denis Vasilyev. **Denis Vasiliev / VK**

A St. Petersburg court has pressed misdemeanor charges against the son of a Leningrad siege survivor who is running to unseat the pro-Kremlin incumbent governor of Russia's second-largest city, local media reported Friday.

Denis Vasilyev was accused of "discrediting" the Russian military, according to the Zaks.ru news website, which cited a local court's press service. The charges are said to be connected to posts he made on the Russian social media website VKontakte.

The St. Petersburg court that registered the case against Vasilyev did not disclose any details about his social media posts.

The man faces up to 50,000 rubles ($580) in fines if found guilty of the charges. Zaks.ru reported that he was previously fined 30,000 rubles under the same charges in October 2022.

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Vasilyev, who reportedly lives in exile but still serves as a local deputy in his native St. Petersburg, is the son of Lyudmila Vasilyeva, a veteran protester and self-nominated candidate for the governor’s seat in the upcoming regional election.

She faces a steep hurdle to get on the ballot as Friday is the deadline to collect 80,000 signatures — or 2% of St. Petersburg’s population — as well as from 155 deputies in at least 80 municipal subjects.

Vasilyeva was detained three times during the early days of Russia’s 2022 invasion of Ukraine

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