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Exiled Russian Journalist Mikhail Zygar Jailed 8.5 Years in Absentia for Bucha 'Fakes'

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Mikhail Zygar **WikiMedia**

A Moscow court has sentenced exiled journalist Mikhail Zygar to eight-and-a-half years in prison in absentia for spreading so-called "fake" information about the Russian military's actions in Ukraine, the independent Mediazona news website reported Tuesday.

The criminal case against Zygar stems from his April 2022 Instagram post in which he spoke about the Russian army's atrocities against civilians in the Ukrainian city of Bucha in the early weeks of the invasion. Russia denies that its troops committed atrocities against civilians in Bucha and has instead accused Kyiv and its Western allies of staging the scenes.

Moscow's Basmanny District Court found Zygar guilty of spreading "false information" about the Russian military and sentenced him to 8.5 years in a general-security penal colony.

The jail term matches the term requested by prosecutors earlier Tuesday, according to

Mediazona, which reported that the judge took 13 minutes to deliberate on the ruling.

Russia outlawed the spread of information that it deems to be "fake" about the military shortly after it invaded Ukraine in February 2022.

Initial reports of Russian authorities bringing criminal charges against Zygar for "war fakes" emerged in April. In May, an administrative case on "discrediting" the Russian army was brought against Zygar before a court in the city of Pskov.

Zygar, 43, is a former editor-in-chief of the independent broadcaster Dozhd, which was also forced into exile after Russia invaded Ukraine. He has written several books and currently works as a columnist for Germany's Der Spiegel and The New York Times.

Russia's Justice Ministry labeled Zygar a "foreign agent" in October 2022.

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