

# Russia Jails Head of Uzbek Diaspora Group Over Meme

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Usman Baratov. **SOTAvision**

A Russian court sentenced the head of an Uzbek diaspora group to four years in prison for “inciting hatred” after he earlier posted a meme spoofing the country’s rising inflation and mobilization for the war in Ukraine, media [reported](#) Monday.

Usman Baratov, a naturalized Russian citizen who heads an Uzbek diaspora association called Vatandosh, was [arrested](#) in January after Russian war correspondents complained to the police about one of his social media posts.

In the post, Baratov attached a meme showing a hen in a chicken coop and the caption: “Screw you and your eggs! Bring the cocks back from the front.”

The meme was an apparent reference to the rising cost of eggs and the growing chorus of families calling for the return of mobilized soldiers from Ukraine.

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The Moscow region's Stupinsky City Court on Monday found Baratov [guilty](#) of inciting hatred toward soldiers deployed as part of Russia's "special military operation" — the Kremlin's preferred term for the full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

Prosecutors had asked for a maximum prison sentence of six years.

The independent RusNews media outlet, which first reported the verdict, [published](#) a video of bailiffs escorting Baratov as he criticized his trial as illegal.

"This is not a verdict. It's a disgrace to justice," he [said](#) from behind a metal cage inside the courtroom.

Russia's human rights group Memorial has [recognized](#) Baratov as a political prisoner.

In February, Russian authorities included Baratov in the country's registry of "terrorists and extremists," allowing the authorities to freeze his bank accounts before a court verdict.

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