The Moscow Times
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Russian Jailed 18 Years After Attempt to Blow Up Army Enlistment Office

By AFP

August 28, 2024



Andrey Nikerichev / Moskva News Agency

A Russian military court sentenced an engineer to 18 years in prison on Wednesday after authorities claimed they foiled his attempt to blow up an army recruitment office, the state-run TASS news agency reported.

The court found Artyom Lozovoi, 39, guilty of treason in the form of espionage, of preparing a "terrorist attack" and of illegally handling explosives. The trial was held behind closed doors.

Lozovoi, a resident of the southern Krasnodar region, was arrested in the fall of 2023 after he was caught trying to access a cache of explosives that authorities said he planned to use to blow up an enlistment office in the city of Voronezh.

The court sentenced him to 18 years in prison. He was also fined 700,000 rubles ($7,660).

Lozovoi pleaded guilty during the trial, which began earlier this month, TASS reported.

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Prosecutors said he decided to join the Freedom of Russia Legion, a pro-Ukrainian paramilitary unit made up of Russian citizens fighting on the side of Kyiv. Russian authorities have prosecuted multiple people in recent months for attempting to join the outfit.

Lozovoi was also accused of sending photos of a military base in Voronezh to the Ukrainian special services.

Last year, he was fined for "discrediting the army" after he reposted an anti-war video.

Since the start of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, the country has cracked down on dissent and protest with harsh court sentences.

At the same time, the country has seen a wave of arson attacks on army offices after the Kremlin announced an unpopular military mobilization drive in September 2022. In May, a court sentenced a Siberian man to 25 years in jail for planning to set fire to a military enlistment office.

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