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Russian Man Jailed for Daughter's Anti-War Drawing Released From Prison

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Alexei Moskalev. **OVD-Info**

Alexei Moskalev, the father of a Russian girl who drew an anti-war picture at school, was released from prison on Tuesday after serving a sentence under Russia's wartime censorship laws.

In March 2023, Moskalev was sentenced to one year and 10 months in prison for repeatedly "discrediting" the Russian military. Moskalev did not attend his sentencing hearing because he fled house arrest to neighboring Belarus, where he was later detained and extradited back to Russia.

Police discovered Moskalev's social media comments criticizing Russia's invasion of Ukraine after faculty at his daughter's school reported her to the authorities for drawing a picture that featured a Ukrainian flag and a Russian flag, as well as the phrases "No to war" and "Glory to Ukraine."

The Memorial human rights group recognized Moskalev as a political prisoner, saying that

the Russian authorities persecuted him for his political views and deprived his daughter Maria of the right to live with her family.

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Maria, who was 12 years old at the time of her father's arrest, was initially left home alone and then later placed in foster care before eventually being handed over to her estranged mother.

On Tuesday, Moskalev walked free from a penal colony in the Tula region town of Novomoskovsk, some 170 kilometers (105 miles) south of Moscow.

Videos of his release shared by the independent outlets RusNews and Sotavision showed him meeting and embracing his daughter Maria.

"I'm happy, only happy," Moskalev, still wearing his prison robes, told journalists. "Russia cannot be fully understood by those who have not been through its prisons."

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