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Russia Jails Oscar-Nominated Film Producer in Absentia

By AFP

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Alexander Rodnyansky speaks during a ceremony to start the 2021 Kinotavr Open Russian Film Festival.
Dmitry Feoktistov / TASS

A Moscow court sentenced Oscar-nominated film producer Alexander Rodnyansky to eight-and-a-half years jail in absentia on Monday for spreading "fake" information about the Russian army.

Rodnyansky, 63, was born in Kyiv but spent most of his career in Russia, producing dozens of TV series and movies there including Oscar-nominated crime drama "Leviathan."

He left the country shortly after it sent troops into Ukraine in February 2022 and has been an outspoken critic of the Kremlin's offensive since, repeatedly denouncing it on social media.

Moscow's Basmanny District Court found him guilty of "spreading knowingly false information about the use of the Russian armed forces," according to a statement by

Moscow's court service.

Rodnyansky said the case was related to his "anti-war posts on Instagram" and said he strongly disagreed with the verdict.

"No Basmanny court can stop me from speaking loudly and doing what I have been doing all my life, making films," he said in a post on Telegram.

Russia has detained, fined and jailed thousands of people for opposing its Ukraine offensive since February 2022 — a crackdown rights groups have compared to the Soviet era.

Rodnyansky began his career in Ukraine, where he founded the country's first independent television network in 1995, but is better known for his film work in Russia.

His 2017-produced film "Loveless" about an estranged couple forced to work together after their child goes missing won the Jury Prize at the Cannes Film Festival.

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