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Russian Lawyer Sentenced to 7 Years in Prison for Criticizing Ukraine Invasion

By AFP

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Dmitry Talantov. **SOTAVision**

A Russian court on Thursday sentenced Dmitry Talantov, a prominent lawyer who once defended jailed journalist Ivan Safronov, to seven years in prison for criticizing Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine on social media.

Talantov was arrested in July 2022 after he likened Russian military actions in the Ukrainian cities of Mariupol and Bucha to "Nazi practices." He was charged under a censorship law introduced shortly after the invasion, accused of spreading "fake" information about the Russian army and inciting hatred.

Talantov, the former head of the Udmurtia Bar Association, previously represented Safronov, a journalist specializing in military affairs whose 22-year treason sentence in 2021 shocked Russia's media community.

During his emotional court statement, Talantov expressed doubts about surviving his prison sentence but stood by his criticism of the war.

"I am 64, and it is hard for me to imagine coming out of prison alive," he said in a recording published by the rights group Perviy Otdel.

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Talantov described harsh conditions in detention, including spending two years in solitary confinement in what he called a "Medieval cell" with only a toilet hole and a tap. He said isolation was compounded by the Russian national anthem blaring at dawn and dusk, followed by pro-Kremlin radio broadcasts.

"I am waiting for words of peace. They do not come," he said. Addressing his wife, he added: "Olga, forgive me. I love you."

Talantov was detained at his dacha in 2022. His arrest sparked outrage among Russia's legal community, with more than 300 lawyers signing a petition demanding his release.

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