

Alexei Gorinov's Last Word in Court: 'Let's Stop This Bloody, Needless Massacre'

November 29, 2024

Former Moscow politician Alexei Gorinov, the first known Russian to be imprisoned for denouncing the invasion of Ukraine, was sentenced to three more years on Friday on charges of “justifying terrorism” that he says he was framed for. Ahead of his sentencing, he read the following statement to the court and the press:



Imprisoned Kremlin critic Alexei Gorinov, sits in a cage of the courtroom as his second trial for criticizing Russia's actions in Ukraine swiftly nears its conclusion in Vladimir, Russia, Friday, Nov. 29, 2024. **AP Photo / Dmitry Serebryakov**

All my life I have been an opponent of aggression, violence and war, and devoted myself exclusively to peaceful activities: science, teaching, education, governance and public activities as a deputy, human rights activist, member of election commissions and controller of the electoral process. I never thought that I would live to see such a level of degradation of my country's political system and its foreign policy, when ordinary citizens who favor peace and are against war, who number in the thousands, would be accused of slandering the Armed

Forces and justifying terrorism, and would be put on trial.

The third year of the war is coming to an end. The third year of casualties and destruction on European territory, of deprivation and suffering of millions of people on a level unprecedented since World War II. We cannot remain silent about this.

Back in late April, our former defense minister announced the losses of the Ukrainian side in the armed conflict – 500,000 people. Think about this number! And what losses have been suffered by Russia, which, according to official information, is constantly successfully advancing along the entire front? We still do not know. And who will be responsible for this? What is all this for?

Our authorities and those who support them in their militaristic aspirations wanted this war so much — and now it has come to our land.

I would like to ask them: has our life become better? Is this how you understand the well-being and security of our country and its population? Or did you not envision these developments in your calculations?

But for now we have to answer not to those who organized the war, continue to kill, propagandize the war and engage in mercenarism. Rather, we ordinary citizens of Russia, who raise our voices against war and for peace, have to answer, paying with our freedom and, for some, with our lives.

I belong to the outgoing generation of people whose parents took part in World War II or survived it with all its hardships. The generation that has already passed away entrusted us with preserving peace with all our might as the most precious thing on Earth for all its inhabitants. But we have neglected these principles and devalued our memory of these people and the victims of that war.

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My guilt is that I, as a citizen of my country, allowed this war to happen and failed to stop it. And I ask you to note this in the verdict. But I would like my guilt and responsibility to be shared with me by the organizers, participants and supporters of the war, as well as the persecutors of those who advocate peace.

I continue to live with the hope that someday it will be so. In the meantime, I ask the people of Ukraine and my fellow citizens affected by the war to forgive me.

Within the framework of the case in which I was accused and tried for my opinion that we need to seek an end to the war, I have expressed my attitude fully to this abominable human endeavor. I can only say that violence and aggression breed nothing but reciprocal violence. This is the true cause of our troubles, our suffering, our senseless sacrifices, the destruction of civilian and industrial infrastructure and our homes.

Let us stop this bloody, needless slaughter — neither for us nor the inhabitants of Ukraine. Isn't it time to leave our neighbors alone and deal with our own snowballing domestic problems? Long ago we proved to the world how brave, resilient and peace-loving we are. So,

maybe enough is enough?

Lev Nikolaevich Tolstoy — from a letter to his son (1904):

‘For me, the madness and criminality of war is so clear that I can see nothing in it except for this madness and criminality.’

I too join and subscribe to these words of our great compatriot.

You can join too!”

SOTAVision reported that Judge Vladimirov interrupted Gorinov when he started to talk about losses in the war in Ukraine and called a 15 minute break so Gorinov could “think over his speech again.

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