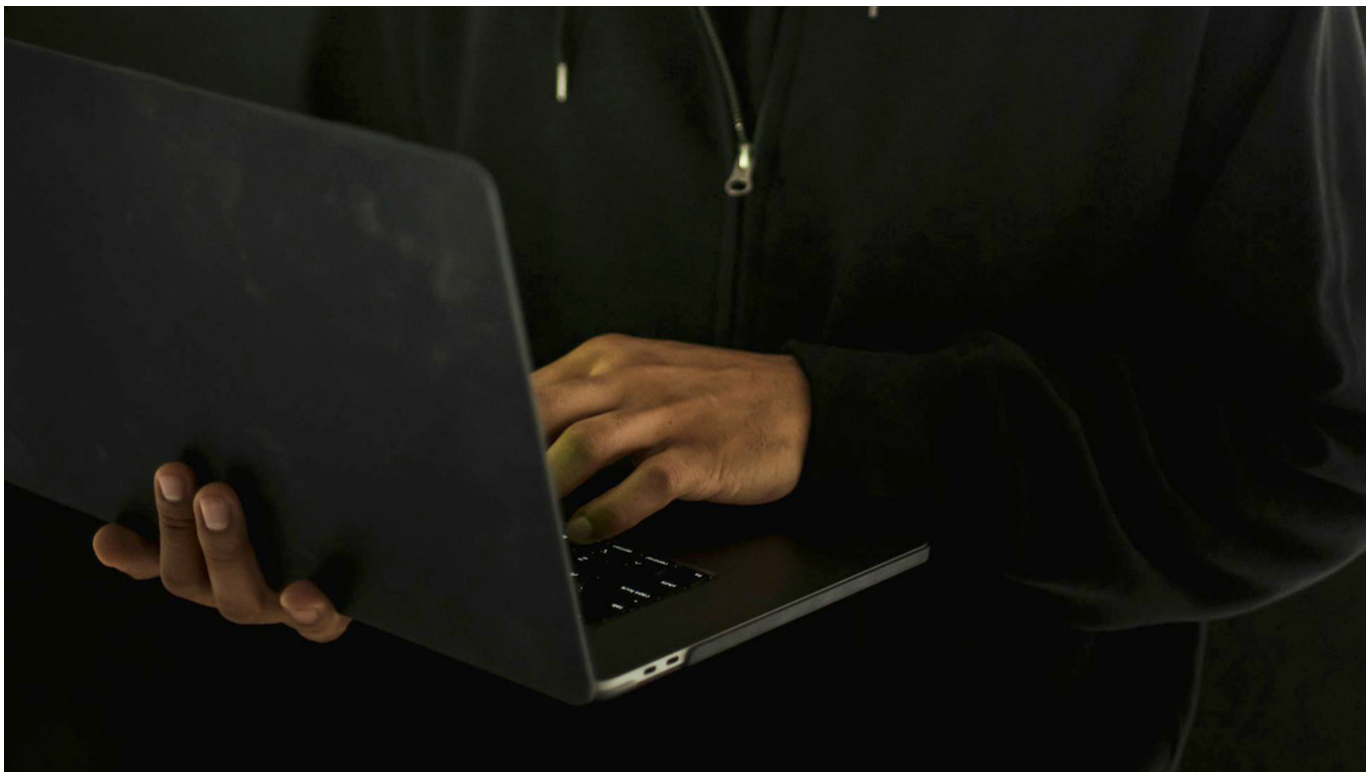
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Russia Sentences Alleged Founder of Hydra Darknet Market to Life in Prison

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Sora Shimazaki / pexels

A Russian court sentenced a crime boss described by state media as the founder of dismantled darknet drug marketplace Hydra to life in prison on organized crime and drug charges.

Founded in 2015, Hydra sold illegal drugs, stolen credit card data, counterfeit currency and fake identity documents. The identities of its 17 million customer accounts and 19,000 vendor accounts were masked by the Tor encryption network.

Hydra was estimated to have been worth over $1.3 billion when German authorities shut it down, took control of its servers and seized its bitcoin assets in April 2022. The identity of its founder is not known to the public.

Related article: Darknet Marketplace Shutdown Upends Russia's Illegal Drug Market

The state-run TASS and Interfax news agencies, citing anonymous law enforcement

authorities, claimed that Stanislav Moiseyev, who was sentenced on drug and organized crime charges on Monday, was Hydra's founder.

The Moscow regional chapter of the Prosecutor General's Office said that Moiseyev and 15 of his accomplices ran an organized criminal group in Russia and Belarus between 2015 and October 2018.

The Moscow Regional Court found Moiseyev and the 15 accomplices guilty of running or being part of an organized criminal group, as well as drug manufacturing and trafficking.

The prosecutor's office did not publicly link Moiseyev to Hydra.

Moiseyev was sentenced to life in prison, while the 15 accomplices were sentenced to between eight years and 23 years in prison.

Moiseyev was also fined 4 million rubles ($37,780) and his accomplices were fined a combined 16 million rubles ($151,120).

The prosecutor's office said law enforcement officers seized almost one metric ton of narcotics and psychotropic substances during raids that dismantled the criminal group.

Authorities confiscated the group members' properties and vehicles as part of their sentences.

The sentences are subject to appeals.

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