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Russian Court Jails Ex-TV Host Lazareva 6.5 Years in Absentia

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Tatyana Lazareva. **Stanislav Krasilnikov / TASS**

A Russian military court sentenced Russian comedian and ex-television host Tatyana Lazareva to nearly seven years in prison in absentia for supporting Ukrainian drone attacks against Russia, the independent news outlet Mediazona reported Tuesday.

The Second Western District Military Court found Lazareva, who lives in Spain, guilty of "publicly justifying acts of terrorism" and sentenced her to six and a half years in prison.

The criminal case against her was linked to a YouTube interview where she said that she feels "happy" when seeing news of Ukrainian strikes in Russia "even though it [sounds] horrible." A criminal investigation into the interview was launched following a complaint filed by State Duma lawmaker Elena Yampolskaya.

Lazareva, 58, has been an outspoken critic of Vladimir Putin and has taken part in major rallies and events organized by the Russian opposition. She was designated a "foreign agent" in July 2022.

Russia’s Interior Ministry issued an arrest warrant against Lazareva in June.

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