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Russian Jazz Musician Sentenced to 6 Years in Prison for Anti-War Facebook Posts

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Andrei Shabanov. **SOTAvision**

A Russian jazz musician suffering from a serious autoimmune disease and spinal condition was sentenced to six years in prison for anti-war and anti-Putin Facebook posts, a group of his supporters said Wednesday.

Saxophonist Andrei Shabanov, who is legally disabled, was arrested in March on accusations of calling for financial support for the Ukrainian military, committing acts of sabotage and joining pro-Ukrainian military units.

Shabanov has psoriatic arthritis, an autoimmune disease affecting the skin and joints. At a court hearing last year, he stripped down to his underwear to show lesions on his body, telling the court that joint damage he had suffered while in custody would leave him unable to ever play music again.

A military court in the southern city of Samara found Shabanov guilty of justifying terrorism and calling for actions against national security. In addition to the six-year prison term, the court barred him from managing websites for three years.

Prosecutors had initially sought an eight-year sentence.

Shabanov pleaded guilty at an earlier hearing and again during his closing statement Wednesday.

In March 2022, during the early days of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, he was fined for posting Adolf Hitler's portrait on the website of an online project commemorating World War II veterans.

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