The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Russia Jails DOXA Co-Founder Aramyan Over 10 Years in Absentia

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February 27, 2025



Armen Aramyan. **Sergei Bobylev / TASS**

A Russian military court on Thursday sentenced Armen Aramyan, the exiled co-founder of the independent youth magazine DOXA, to 10 years and one month in prison in absentia under wartime censorship laws.

The court found Aramyan guilty of justifying terrorism and spreading "deliberately false information" about the Russian military, according to the Moscow prosecutor's office.

Prosecutors accused Aramyan of posting a "fake" map of Ukrainian civilians killed during Russia's occupation of Bucha and publishing an editorial calling for violent resistance against the Russian government, the independent news website Mediazona reported.

The judge also banned Aramyan from managing websites for four years. State prosecutors had sought a 12-year, one-month sentence.

Aramyan, who now lives in Europe, told The Moscow Times that he hoped Thursday's sentencing would not lead to real jail time.

"There's always a risk that I could end up transiting through a country that decides to extradite me to Russia, and that's a risk I'll have to live with," he said in written comments.

"Right now, though, there are people who are far less fortunate — those who are actually forced to serve these insane sentences," Aramyan added, urging supporters to donate to organizations that help political prisoners in Russia.

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Russia's Prosecutor General's Office designated DOXA an "undesirable" organization last year, making affiliation with the outlet a criminal offense.

In October, Russia's financial authorities added Aramyan to their list of "terrorists and extremists," effectively freezing his bank accounts.

Aramyan fled to Armenia and later Germany after he and fellow DOXA editors were sentenced to two years of correctional labor in April 2022 for allegedly inciting minors to protest in support of Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny in 2021.

Founded in 2017, DOXA lost its official status as a student organization in 2019 after Moscow's Higher School of Economics cracked down on political activism following that year's opposition protests.

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