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Finnish Court Sentences Russian Ultranationalist to Life in Prison for War Crimes in Ukraine

By AFP

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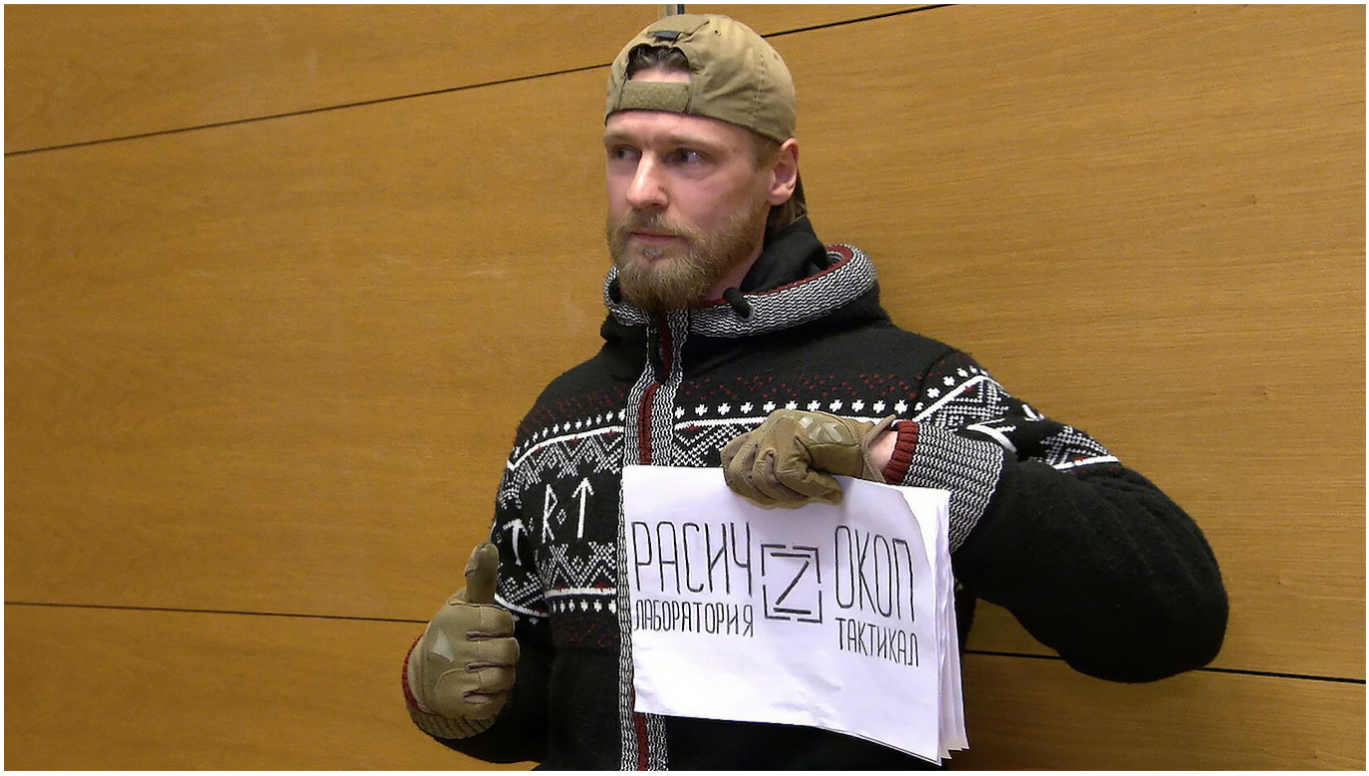

Vojislav Torden (Yan Petrovsky). **mtvuutiset.fi**

A Finnish court on Friday sentenced Russian ultranationalist Vojislav Torden to life in prison for war crimes committed in Ukraine in 2014, including the mutilation of a wounded Ukrainian soldier.

The Helsinki District Court found Torden, a commander in the Russian far-right paramilitary group Rusich, guilty of four war crimes in eastern Ukraine's Luhansk region.

Prosecutors had accused Torden, who used to go by the name Yan Petrovsky, of five counts of war crimes, including responsibility for an ambush that resulted in the deaths of 22 Ukrainian soldiers.

However, the court dismissed the main charge, ruling that the prosecution had not proven

that Rusich and Torden were responsible for organizing and carrying out the attack.

"It has not been possible to conclude from the evidence... that the Rusich unit or group was specifically responsible for organizing and carrying out the ambush and arson attack in all respects," the court said.

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Torden was, however, convicted of leading Rusich fighters at the scene after the ambush and of killing a wounded soldier. He was also found guilty of authorizing fighters to carve Rusich's symbol — a kolovrat, or "spoked wheel" — into the cheek of another injured soldier, Ivan Issyk, who later died from his wounds.

The kolovrat is frequently used by ultranationalist and neo-Nazi groups in Russia and Eastern Europe.

Additionally, the court ruled that Torden took and shared degrading photos of a fallen soldier on social media.

Finland applies the legal principle of "universal jurisdiction," allowing it to prosecute serious crimes committed anywhere in the world.

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