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Russian Comedian Arrested Over Joke About 'Disabled Soldier'

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Comedian Vladimir Ostanin. **Video grab**

Russian stand-up comedian Artemyi Ostanin was arrested on charges of inciting hatred over a joke about a disabled man, authorities said Tuesday.

Russia's Investigative Committee, which probes major crimes, said Sunday it had launched a criminal case after Ostanin's "offensive comments" about a Russian soldier in the Ukraine war were published online.

Pro-war bloggers reportedly took offense to Ostanin's February performance, in which he joked about being run over by a homeless man who had "hit a mine" and had been "skateboarding without legs for 20 years" in the Moscow metro.

Ostanin insisted his remarks had been misinterpreted and were not about a Ukraine war veteran.

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On Tuesday, the Investigative Committee dropped any reference to a Ukraine war veteran in its announcement of Ostanin’s arrest while attempting to cross the Russian border.

“According to investigators, the suspect made hostile comments about people who were injured and disabled during a public appearance in Moscow no later than March 15, 2025,” the committee said.

Ostanin faces up to six years in prison if convicted of inciting hatred or enmity.

Telegram news channels with alleged ties to Belarusian security services claimed that Belarusian border agents detained Ostanin and handed him over to Russian authorities.

Those reports could not be independently verified.

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