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Military Court Jails Soviet-Era Dissident Skobov 16 Years for 'Justifying Terrorism'

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Alexander Skobov. **@sotavisionmedia**

A Russian military court sentenced Soviet-era dissident Alexander Skobov to 16 years in prison on charges of justifying terrorism and being a member of a terrorist organization, the exiled news outlet Mediazona reported Friday.

Skobov, 67, was arrested in April on allegations that he justified an attack on the Russian-built Crimea Bridge in an online post and was a member of the Lithuania-based liberal opposition platform Free Russia Forum, which Russian authorities have outlawed as "undesirable."

A military court in St. Petersburg convicted Skobov on both charges and sentenced him to serve his time in a maximum-security prison.

Prosecutors had requested an 18-year sentence for Skobov, whose health had deteriorated

significantly during pre-trial detention.

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In a defiant last statement in court, Skobov condemned both Russian and U.S. leaders as "predators" engaged in an "imperialist conspiracy" in Ukraine.

"Death to the Russian fascist invaders! Death to Putin, the new Hitler, the murderer and scoundrel! Glory to Ukraine!" Mediazona quoted Skobov as saying.

"I'm the one blaming you here. I accuse Putin's ruling clique, which stinks of corpses, of preparing, unleashing and waging an aggressive war," Skobov added.

Russia's Justice Ministry designated Skobov as a "foreign agent" in March 2024. He is among the few outspoken critics of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine to remain inside the country despite the risk of facing criminal charges under wartime censorship laws.

A dissident since the late 1970s, Skobov was convicted twice and subjected to punitive psychiatric treatment for "anti-Soviet propaganda."

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