

Jailed Journalist Ponomarenko Receives New Sentence for Alleged Assault on Prison Guards

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Maria Ponomarenko. @sotavisionmedia

Siberian journalist and activist Maria Ponomarenko, who is serving a six-year jail sentence for speaking out against the war in Ukraine, was <u>sentenced</u> Thursday to an additional year and 10 months for allegedly assaulting prison guards.

Ponomarenko, 46, was <u>convicted</u> in 2023 for publishing reports on Russia's bombing of a theater in Mariupol, Ukraine. She denies both that charge and the latest <u>assault accusation</u>, calling the case politically motivated and <u>accusing</u> prison authorities of abuse.

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A judge in the Altai region found her guilty of "disrupting the work of a penal colony,"

according to her employer, RusNews.

Prosecutors <u>had sought</u> a two-year sentence, asking to combine it with her existing term. According to Ponomarenko's lawyer, a judge granted the combined sentence, which means she is set for release in three years.

The human rights group Memorial recognizes the journalist as a political prisoner.

Ponomarenko has been <u>diagnosed</u> with histrionic personality disorder and has attempted suicide in detention. RusNews <u>reported</u> earlier this month that she was again on the verge of suicide and had launched a hunger strike to demand better conditions.

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