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St. Petersburg Court Jails Anti-War Teenager Nearly 3 Years for 'Discrediting' Army

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Daria Kozyreva. **t.me/mediazzzona**

A judge in St. Petersburg sentenced 19-year-old anti-war activist Daria Kozyreva to nearly three years in prison on Friday for repeatedly "discrediting" the Russian military.

Petrogradsky District Court Judge Dmitry Ovrakh ordered Kozyreva to serve two years and eight months at a medium-security penal colony and banned her from publishing anything on the internet for two and a half years. Prosecutors sought a six-year prison sentence.

Kozyreva was arrested in February 2024 after she attached a poem by Ukrainian writer Taras Shevchenko to his monument in St. Petersburg.

Law enforcement authorities brought a second charge against Kozyreva in August, citing her in interview with Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) following her expulsion from St. Petersburg State University. Kozyreva denied the charges in court on Friday.

“My opinion is that the army discredited itself after the full-scale invasion, so any statement against it will discredit nothing,” she was quoted as saying by the exiled news outlet Mediazona.

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In her final statement in court, Kozyreva condemned the February 2022 invasion and applauded Ukrainians for “defending their homeland.”

“Ukraine is a free country, a free nation, and it will decide its own destiny,” she said. “It is clear that Putin cannot get his head around the idea that Ukraine is a sovereign nation.”

Kozyreva was released from pre-trial detention in February under restrictions barring her from leaving home at night, using the internet or speaking to the press until Dec. 2. In 2023, she was fined 30,000 rubles ($365) for an anti-war social media post and expelled from university.

The year before, Kozyreva was arrested for writing “Murderers, you bombed it to rubble. Judases” on a public installation symbolizing the “brotherhood” between St. Petersburg and Mariupol — an occupied Ukrainian city that was largely destroyed in a Russian siege.

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