The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Trans Woman Charged With Justifying Terrorism Launches Hunger Strike in Jail

April 29, 2025



SOTAvision

A transgender woman on trial for allegedly justifying terrorism online has gone on a hunger strike to protest her treatment in jail, a prisoner rights group said Monday.

Olga Sivushkova, 37, was arrested in January on accusations of sharing a link to an interview with a spokesman for the Freedom of Russia Legion, a Ukraine-based paramilitary unit of Russian citizens opposed to the Kremlin.

"I'm getting tongue-tied because I'm on the 13th day of a hunger strike," Sivushkova was quoted as telling a judge on Monday, according to the prisoner rights group Russia Behind Bars.

"The situation is terrible. I sleep on the floor. They're pressuring me, trying to break and humiliate me," she said via videolink from a pre-trial detention center in the Vologda region.

Sivushkova, who is being tried by a St. Petersburg military court, faces up to seven years in

prison on charges of publicly justifying terrorism online.

Related article: Why the Khachaturyan Sisters' Case Fired Up Russian Feminists

According to the independent news outlet Sotavision, Sivushkova accused investigators of illegally searching her home and her court-appointed attorney of tricking her into signing a confession under the false promise that she would get away with a fine.

Sivushkova previously appeared in reports alleging that she was a police informant in a high-profile criminal case where seven young activists were imprisoned and handed suspended sentences on charges of plotting to overthrow President Vladimir Putin.

She has since changed her name from Olga Pshenichnikova to Olga Sivushkova.

Police said they found an Israeli passport during searches issued to Andrei Pshenichnikov, a male name that Sivushkova held before transitioning, according to the news website Mediazona.

The Pshenichnikov family moved to Israel from Tajikistan when Sivushkova was a 13-year-old boy, Mediazona reported, adding that Pshenichnikov later served four years in the Israeli Defense Forces.

A St. Petersburg military court offered Sivushkova to close the rest of the trial to the public to avoid disclosing medical records related to her gender transition, according to Sotavision.

“Let it all be revealed,” she was quoted as saying.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2025/04/29/trans-woman-charged-with-justifying-terrorism-launches-hunger-strike-in-jail-a88909