The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Chelyabinsk Teenager Jailed Nearly 10 Years for Murder That Sparked Anti-Roma Riots

June 03, 2025



Yegor Yurchenko being escorted from a police truck. **74.ru**

A 17-year-old from the Chelyabinsk region was sentenced to nearly 10 years in prison for a murder that triggered violent riots targeting the local Roma community last fall, Russian media reported Tuesday.

Yegor Yurchenko, who is deaf and nonverbal, was arrested in October on suspicion of killing 40-year-old taxi driver Yelena Sarafanova, who had been driving him home.

The murder sparked unrest in the town of Korkino, where residents attacked properties believed to belong to Romani families and clashed with riot police. Days later, the regional governor criticized local authorities for failing to prevent the violence, while federal investigators accused them of ignoring "longstanding concerns" about the Roma community's alleged criminal activity.

In the weeks that followed, police conducted “crime prevention” raids in what they described as areas densely populated by people "prone to illegal activities." Officers seized weapons and issued military draft notices during the operations.

Related article: Russian Police Target Romani Community in Fresh Raids, Seizing Weapons and Issuing Draft Notices

On Tuesday, the Chelyabinsk Regional Court found Yurchenko guilty of murder and carjacking and sentenced him to nine years and 10 months in prison, the news website Ura.ru reported from the courtroom.

The court also ordered Yurchenko’s family to pay 2 million rubles ($25,400) and 146,000 rubles ($1,800) in damages to the victim’s relatives. Authorities froze the family’s bank accounts and property pending payment.

Yurchenko denied the charges. According to Ura.ru, he began banging on the glass of his defendant’s cage and making unintelligible sounds after the sentence was read out through a sign language interpreter.

In April, his parents accused his cellmates of beating and abusing him. Regional prison officials said medical staff had not found any injuries.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2025/06/03/chelyabinsk-teenager-jailed-nearly-10-years-for-murder-that-sparked-anti-roma-riots-a89313