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Ex-State TV Anchor Jailed 8 Years in Absentia for 'War Fakes' and 'Justifying Terrorism'

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Farida Kurbangaleeva. **Social media**

A Russian military court on Friday sentenced former state television anchor Farida Kurbangaleeva to eight years in prison in absentia for spreading "false information" about the military and "justifying terrorism," the independent news outlet Mediazona reported.

Authorities pressed charges against Kurbangaleeva following her May 2024 interview with a fighter from the Free Russia Legion, a group of anti-Kremlin Russians fighting for Ukraine that Moscow has designated a terrorist organization. She was also charged over a series of posts on her anti-war Telegram channel.

The Free Russia Legion fighter she interviewed, Alexei Baranovsky, was sentenced to six years in prison in absentia, Mediazona reported on Friday.

Kurbangaleeva, who now lives in the Czech Republic, was placed on Russia's wanted list in

June 2024. The Prosecutor General's Office requested her extradition in February.

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Kurbangaleeva began her journalism career in 1998 in Kazan. From 2007 to 2014, she hosted the Vesti news program on the state-run Rossiya-1 channel before resigning following Russia's annexation of Crimea and the outbreak of war in eastern Ukraine.

She later worked at the Prague-based broadcaster Current Time, a joint project of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty. She now works with the exiled news outlet Govorit NeMoskva and runs her own YouTube channel.

Kurbangaleeva told The Moscow Times that she was unsurprised by the court ruling on Friday, saying, "What else can you expect from what we call 'Putin's justice?'"

"I have no plans to stop running my YouTube channel. I took a short break from work, but I intend to return as host in the new season this fall," she added.

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