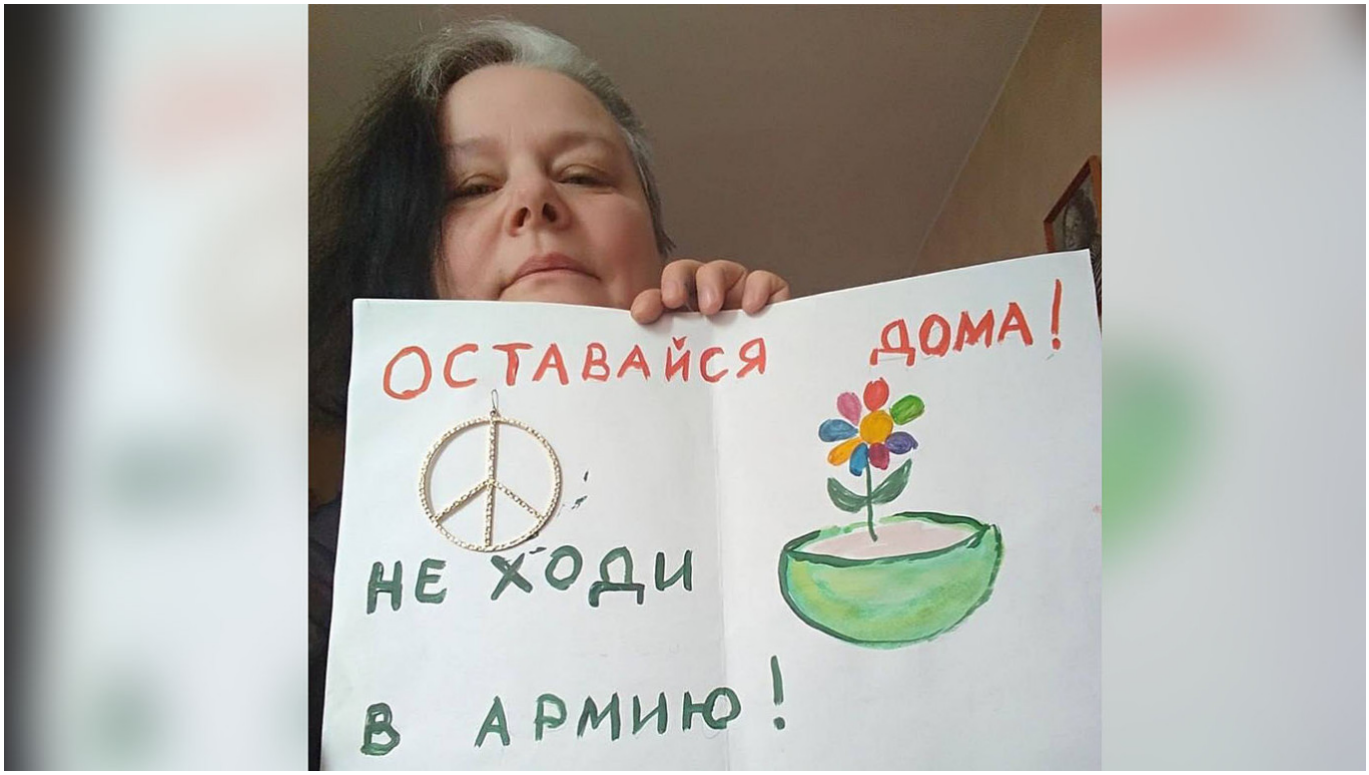
The Moscow Times
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St. Petersburg Court Rules to Release Anti-War Activist Pending 'War Fakes' Trial

August 06, 2025



Yelena Popova. **Social media**

A St. Petersburg court has ruled to release anti-war activist Yelena Popova from custody as she awaits trial on the charge of spreading "false information" about the military, Russian media reported on Wednesday.

Law enforcement authorities pressed the charge against Popova last month over a May 2024 livestream on social media marking the 10th anniversary of the Movement of Conscientious Objectors, an organization that helps men avoid military service by legal means.

It was not immediately clear what Popova said or did in the livestream that prompted authorities to press charges against her.

Popova is a co-founder of the Movement of Conscientious Objectors, which the Justice Ministry designated as a "foreign agent" in June 2023. She announced that she would leave

the organization on the same day she was charged with spreading “false information” about the military, citing “longstanding emotional fatigue.”

The charge against Popova carries a maximum prison sentence of five years. Law enforcement authorities often accuse activists and ordinary Russians of spreading “false information” about the military to silence dissent.

A trial date for Popova has not been announced.

Video shared by the Movement of Conscientious Objectors on Wednesday showed Popova smiling and embracing her supporters in the courthouse hallway after the ruling. Popova was briefly hospitalized before the hearing, according to the legal rights group Perviy Otdel.

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