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Moscow Court Jails Exiled Journalist, LGBTQ+ Activist Shainyan 5 Years in Absentia

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Karen Shainyan. **ostwest.tv**

A Moscow court has sentenced exiled journalist and LGBTQ+ rights activist Karen Shainyan to five years in prison in absentia on extremism charges, the exiled news website Mediazona reported on Thursday.

Russian prosecutors accused Shainyan of "financing extremist activities" by donating 2,000 rubles ($24.60) to the late opposition activist Alexei Navalny's Anti-Corruption Foundation in January and February 2022.

The Anti-Corruption Foundation and Navalny's wider political network were declared "extremist" in Russia in 2021.

On Thursday, the Savyolovsky District Court of Moscow found Shainyan guilty of financing extremism and sentenced him in absentia.

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Prosecutors had asked the court to sentence Shainyan, 44, to six years in prison in absentia earlier on Thursday. Sentences issued in absentia are typically enforced only if the defendant is extradited to Russia.

According to Mediazona, Shainyan's attorney claimed the prosecution had failed to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that his client had made the alleged wire transfers and presented questionable evidence in court.

Shainyan, whose YouTube channel with 207,000 subscribers lists Germany as his current location, has not publicly commented on his jail sentence.

Russia's Justice Ministry declared Shainyan a "foreign agent" in April 2022, less than two months after the full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

Russia's financial monitoring agency Rosfinmonitoring added Shainyan to its list of "terrorists and extremists" in July 2023, more than a year before news of the criminal case against him became public.

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