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Prominent Russian Culinary Historian Hit With Criminal Charges for 'Army Fakes'

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Pavel Syutkin **Personal archive**

Russian law enforcement authorities on Wednesday pressed criminal charges against culinary historian Pavel Syutkin for allegedly spreading "false information" about the Russian military.

Syutkin, 60, is accused of spreading so-called "fakes" about the war in Ukraine in posts on his Telegram channel "Russian Cuisine: A History," which has over 3,400 subscribers, the Moscow branch of Russia's Investigative Committee said in a statement.

According to his relatives, the charge is related to Syutkin's posts about Russian atrocities against civilians in the Kyiv suburb of Bucha in the early weeks of the full-scale invasion.

Moscow has denied committing war crimes in Bucha and accused Kyiv of staging the images, a claim which has been debunked by several independent fact-checking organizations and media outlets.

Syutkin was taken in for questioning at the Moscow branch of the Investigative Committee, where he was expected to be formally charged and placed in pre-trial detention later Wednesday.

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Law enforcement authorities searched the historian's home in June, seizing his electronic devices.

His relatives said they believe the criminal case against him may have been prompted by someone reporting on him to the authorities. Syutkin could face up to 10 years in prison if convicted.

Syutkin has published several books on the history of Russian and Soviet cuisine and hosted programs on national television and radio devoted to the history of food. In 2015, Syutkin represented Russia as an official ambassador at the World Expo in Milan.

He and his wife wrote a weekly cooking column for The Moscow Times until Russian authorities banned the outlet as "undesirable" in July 2024.

In a video recorded at the Investigative Committee office and obtained by The Moscow Times, Syutkin said he disagreed with the allegations against him.

"Any honest writer, journalist or historian in Russia must always be ready for prison," he added.

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