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Moscow Court Jails Singer Monetochka in Absentia for Breaking 'Foreign Agents' Law

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Singer Monetochka at a concert in Amsterdam. **Vanyka-slovanyka (CC BY 4.0)**

A Moscow court has ordered the arrest in absentia of anti-war Russian pop singer Monetochka on charges of evading foreign agent obligations, the city prosecutor's office said Monday.

The ruling means Monetochka, whose real name is Yelizaveta Gyrdymova, could face detention if she returns to Russia.

Prosecutors accused her of continuing to post materials on social media without the legally required foreign agent disclaimer, after being fined twice for the same offense earlier within a year.

Monetochka has not publicly commented on the Moscow court decision as of Monday afternoon.

Russia's Justice Ministry designated Monetochka a "foreign agent" in January 2023 after she spoke out against the full-scale invasion of Ukraine and raised funds to support Ukrainian civilians.

In June and August of that year, she was fined 30,000 rubles ($380) each time for failing to label posts with the "foreign agent" tag.

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Russian authorities opened a criminal case against Monetochka in September 2024, and she was placed on a wanted list the following month.

If found guilty of breaking Russia's law on "foreign agents," Gyrdymova faces up to two years in prison.

The singer left Russia shortly after the February 2022 invasion of Ukraine and has since settled in Europe, where she continues to perform and record music for Russian-speaking audiences in exile.

Authorities in Russia use the "foreign agent" label to target individuals they view as enemies of the state. Those designated must prominently display disclaimers on their publications, including social media posts, and provide extensive financial disclosures to the government.

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