

Russia Sentences 2 Colombians Who Fought With Ukraine to 13 Years

By [AFP](#)

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Jose Aron Medina Aranda and Alexander Ante. genproc.gov.ru

They are the latest foreign fighters to get lengthy jail terms as “mercenaries” by Russian-installed authorities after joining Ukraine's army.

“For participating in hostilities on the side of the Armed Forces of Ukraine,” Alexander Ante, 48, and Jose Aron Medina Aranda, 37, were each sentenced to 13 years in prison, the prosecutor's office said on Telegram.

The pair had fought for Ukraine in 2023 and 2024, and then vanished in July while on a stopover in Russian ally Venezuela en route back home after their deployment.

Colombian daily El Tiempo reported in July 2024 that police had arrested them in Caracas, the capital of Venezuela, still wearing their Ukrainian army uniforms.

The pair were next seen in a video published by Russia's FSB security service, handcuffed,

wearing Russian prison clothing and being walked through a court building by masked security officers.

“I don't know if we will see them again one day, that's the sad reality,” Medina's wife, Cielo Paz, told AFP. She has had no contact with him since his arrest, she added, denouncing what she said was an unjust sentence.

Bogota says dozens of Colombians have been killed in Ukraine since the start of Russia's full-scale invasion in February 2022, where many have flocked to take up arms against Russia.

Moscow has prosecuted captured foreign fighters as “mercenaries,” a charge which carries up to 15 years in prison, rather than treating them as captured prisoners of war with protections under the Geneva Conventions.

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