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Moscow Scientist Sentenced to 21 Years in Prison on Treason Charges

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Artyom Khoroshilov. **Social media**

A Moscow region judge has sentenced physicist Artyom Khoroshilov to 21 years in a maximum-security prison for treason, Russian media reported Thursday.

Khoroshilov was arrested in December 2023 on accusations of carrying out distributed denial-of-service (DDoS) attacks on critical infrastructure on behalf of Ukraine, sending money to the Ukrainian military and gathering sensitive information about the Russian army.

Khoroshilov, 34, confessed to some of the charges against him but denied the state prosecution's claims of his direct involvement in a DDoS attack on Russian Post servers in August 2022, according to the exiled news outlet Mediazona.

In his final statement last week, Khoroshilov said Russia's invasion of Ukraine was a personal tragedy for him since many of his relatives live there.

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On Thursday, a judge from the Moscow Region Court found Khoroshilov guilty of treason, attacks on critical infrastructure, possession of explosives and intent to commit acts of sabotage.

Prosecutors had requested a 25-year prison sentence for Khoroshilov.

Treason and other criminal cases related to issues of national security in Russia are often heard behind closed doors.

Khoroshilov graduated from the Moscow Institute of Physics and Technology (MIPT) and worked as a researcher at the Russian Academy of Sciences' Institute of General Physics.

Khoroshilov's case comes amid a wider crackdown under Russia's treason and espionage laws since the full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

According to data from the Kirill Parubets Analytical Center, Russian courts issued 224 treason or espionage-related verdicts in the first half of 2025 alone, the highest number in modern Russian history.

A total of 232 people faced such charges during that period, meaning courts handed down nearly two convictions per working day on average.

By comparison, 167 people were convicted on treason or espionage charges in 2023, and 143 in the first half of 2024. Each case resulted in a guilty verdict and a prison sentence.

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