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Leftist Activist Sergei Udaltsov Jailed 6 Years for 'Justifying Terrorism'

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Sergei Udaltsov. **Vladimir Gerdo / TASS**

A Moscow military court on Thursday sentenced leftist activist Sergei Udaltsov to six years in prison after finding him guilty of "justifying terrorism."

The verdict was handed down by Moscow's Second Western District Military Court, the Interfax news agency reported. Udaltsov, 48, has been in pre-trial detention since January 2024 and will serve his sentence in a maximum-security penal colony.

Udaltsov said he would appeal the ruling and announced a hunger strike after his sentence was read out.

"This is a shameful decision. Everyone who took part in it will be held responsible, I hope," he said in court on Thursday. "To hell with you, you dogs. I hope you meet the same fate, you scum."

Prosecutors had sought a seven-year prison sentence, while Udaltsov's defense argued for

acquittal.

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The specific details of the case were classified, but Udaltsov said at a previous court hearing that the charge stemmed from online statements he made in support of members of a group of self-described Marxists who were jailed last week on terrorism and attempted coup charges.

Udaltsov was a prominent opposition figure in the early 2010s and spoke at protests against President Vladimir Putin's return to the presidency in 2012.

He was sentenced in 2014 to four and a half years in prison for organizing what authorities described as "mass riots." He was released after three years.

Udaltsov has publicly backed the annexation of Crimea and Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, saying he opposes Putin from a "patriotic" left-wing position, with domestic socio-economic policies being his main focus.

An admirer of Soviet leader Joseph Stalin, Udaltsov has called for the restoration of the U.S.S.R. and has been repeatedly detained and fined for organizing commemorative events marking Stalin's birthday.

AFP contributed reporting.

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