The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Meduza Publisher Galina Timchenko Jailed 5 Years in Absentia

December 26, 2025



Galina Timchenko. **Dimitrios Kambouris / Getty Images via AFP**

A Moscow court on Friday handed a five-year prison sentence to Galina Timchenko, the exiled founder and publisher of the Latvia-based news outlet Meduza, on charges related to the outlet's designation as an "undesirable" organization.

Timchenko was found guilty in absentia of running an "undesirable" organization, a status assigned to Meduza by Russia's General Prosecutor's Office in 2023. State prosecutors had requested that she be sentenced to six years in prison.

Under Russian law, "undesirable" organizations are barred from operating in the country. Individuals found to be affiliated with "undesirable" organizations can face up to four years in prison, while organization leaders risk up to six years.

In June 2024, a Moscow court fined Timchenko 14,000 rubles ($177) for participating in the activities of an "undesirable" organization. She was later charged with a more severe criminal offense and arrested in absentia this summer.

Related article: Regions Calling: 2025 Wrapped

Timchenko served as editor-in-chief of the Lenta.ru news website until 2014, when she was fired by the outlet's incoming owner, Kremlin-linked investor Alexander Mamut. She later relocated to Latvia, where she founded Meduza.

According to court records cited by the exiled news outlet Mediazona, prosecutors claimed that Timchenko founded Meduza out of "hatred and contempt" for Russia's political system and its domestic and foreign policies.

They also argued that she continued operating the outlet after it was designated "undesirable" in order to preserve its influence inside Russia, including through a mobile application that bypasses domestic restrictions.

Timchenko's lawyer had asked the court to acquit her, arguing that the prosecution was infringing on her constitutional right to freedom of expression, Mediazona reported.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2025/12/26/meduza-publisher-galina-timchenko-jailed-5-years-in-absentia-a91551