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Judge Sentences Lev Shlosberg to 11 Years in Prison for Anti-War Statements

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Lev Shlosberg in court. **Olga Maltseva / AFP**

A judge in the Pskov region has sentenced veteran opposition politician Lev Shlosberg to 11 years and one month in prison for "discrediting" and spreading "fake news" about the Russian military, Russian media reported Monday.

The sentence partially combines near-maximum penalties under wartime censorship laws with a previous November 2025 conviction in which Shlosberg was sentenced to 420 hours of community service for violating Russia's "foreign agent" law, the exiled news outlet Mediazona reported.

State prosecutors had sought a sentence of 12 years and one month in prison.

Shlosberg, a senior member of the liberal political party Yabloko, pleaded not guilty, instead accusing prosecutors of "discrediting" Russian law.

"I am an innocent man, against whom criminal charges have been unlawfully brought, who

was unlawfully deprived of liberty pending a court verdict, and who is being unlawfully deprived of liberty following a court verdict," Shlosberg said in his final statement in court.

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The military "fakes" charge stems from a Feb. 25, 2022, Telegram post in which Shlosberg reshared content from the now-defunct Ekho Moskvy radio station. The post featured a British tabloid cover depicting President Vladimir Putin alongside a bloodied woman.

Shlosberg argued in court that he made the post before Russia passed its wartime censorship laws.

The separate "discrediting" charge, meanwhile, is linked to a January 2025 public debate in which Shlosberg was accused of calling for a ceasefire in Ukraine. Shlosberg denied publishing a video of the debate on social media and noted that the specific statements cited by prosecutors were actually made by his debate opponent.

The legal proceedings have been marked by procedural irregularities, according to independent news outlets. Novaya Gazeta reported that the Pskov City Court judge refused to question Shlosberg directly, reading transcripts from earlier sessions instead.

In addition, after Shlosberg's three defense attorneys missed hearings due to illness and scheduling conflicts, the judge appointed a state lawyer and rejected motions to decline the representation.

Shlosberg's jail sentence comes on the same day that Russia's Supreme Court hears an appeal from Yabloko over the decision to cancel the registration of the party's federal candidate list for the State Duma elections next month.

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