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Prosecutors Seek 8-Year Prison Sentence for Culinary Historian Pavel Syutkin

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Pavel Syutkin in court. **@zapravarf / Telegram**

State prosecutors in Moscow have asked a judge to sentence culinary historian and former columnist for The Moscow Times, Pavel Syutkin, to eight years in prison for spreading "false information" about the Russian military, the civil rights group For Human Rights said Wednesday.

Syutkin was arrested last October over Telegram posts about alleged atrocities committed against civilians in the Kyiv suburb of Bucha during the opening weeks of Russia's full-scale invasion.

Russia continues to deny committing war crimes in Bucha, alleging the visual evidence was staged by Ukraine. That claim has been repeatedly debunked by independent fact-checking organizations.

Closing arguments in Syutkin's trial were heard behind closed doors at the Zyuzinsky District Court, according to exiled news outlet Mediazona. A verdict is expected next Tuesday.

Syutkin maintains his innocence. "My case is clearly political," he wrote in April. "There's really nothing to prove in cases like this. You get punished for what you say and for openly opposing the war."

Syutkin has published several books on the history of Russian and Soviet cuisine and hosted programs on national television and radio devoted to the history of food. In 2015, Syutkin represented Russia as an official ambassador at the World Expo in Milan.

Syutkin and his wife wrote a weekly cooking column for The Moscow Times until Russian authorities banned the news outlet as "undesirable" in July 2024.

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