

Opposition Activist Mikhail Krieger's Final Statement to Russian Court

May 18, 2023



Mikhail Krieger during a court hearing. **Antonina Favorskaya / Sota**

Russian opposition activist Mikhail Krieger was sentenced to seven years in prison Wednesday on charges of "justifying terrorism" and "inciting hatred" that he and his supporters describe as politically motivated due to his opposition to the war in Ukraine.

In his final word in court ahead of his sentencing, Krieger, 63, decried Russian President Vladimir Putin, his war on Ukraine and the security agencies he oversees, while calling for victory for Ukraine.

The Moscow Times has translated his statement into English, with notes added for context.

Your Honor and members of the court,

I am charged with two Facebook posts that were two years old at the time of my detention. I must conclude that my posts are just a pretext. I am being persecuted for my anti-war and now openly pro-Ukrainian position. I don't try to hide it. To the contrary, I try to make it clear

to as many people as possible at every opportunity.

This war is, in my view, the rare conflict in which the truth is one hundred percent on one side. And that is the Ukrainian side.

I wanted to somehow wash away the fratricidal shame that stains our country, so I helped Ukrainian refugees and on social networks expressed my sincere hope for a Ukrainian victory in every way.

I was and am still convinced that if Russians are to win their freedom, it will only come out of this victory, just as freedom came to Japan and Germany out of martial law.

In the words of Alexander Gorodnitsky: "Victory is not always necessary for freedom. Sometimes defeat is even better..."

But back to the charges leveled against me.

I am accused of permitting myself to publicly dream about Putin's hanging. Yes, I do dream of living to see that day of celebration.

I am sure that our dictator deserves the same kind of execution as other war criminals who were hanged, for example by the verdict of the Nuremberg Tribunal. He is the same kind of lying tyrant who has arrogated to himself unfettered power, and like those before him he is up to his elbows in blood. My opinion is justified by the [arrest warrant](#) issued by the ICC in The Hague.

Related article: [Moscow Court Jails Russian Opposition Activist for 7 Years](#)

But could it be that in these dreams of mine I have forgotten about mercy, about "mercy for the fallen," so to speak? Again, no. After all, at the mercy of this butcher — precisely at his mercy — blood continues to be shed every day.

And since it is clear to all that he will not leave his position of power, his arrest and execution is the only way to stop the fratricidal bloodshed, which he — he, I insist — unleashed against a fraternal nation, the people of my homeland, my beloved Ukraine.

Now, because of our Führer's maniacal ambitions, many of my relatives, classmates and childhood friends are sitting in basements in my hometown of [Dnipro](#), waiting to be shelled and bombed. For what? Because our human "sun god" didn't play enough with toy soldiers as a child? Because he is a follower — as I have observed — of the very, very real Führer, and seems to be following his example?

I insist that my "pipe dream" is just, reasonable, and appropriate.

Or, to paraphrase a famous lackey by the name of Volodin, let us say: "Where there is Putin, there are rivers of blood. No Putin — no bloodshed."

I hope I have sufficiently and clearly justified my dream?

Then let's move on to my second charge.

I am also charged with inciting hatred for the FSB. It's true — I really don't like this agency, which is an absolute analog of the Gestapo during Hitler's Reich. It even surpasses it in evil and brutality. Why, you ask? Because the German executioners fought the real enemies of the Reich and the Fuhrer — albeit by inhuman methods — and did not invent them.

But our Putin Gestapo agents invent "enemies." With the help of provocateurs, they create "terrorist organizations" and then "expose" them. That is, they destroy the lives of teenagers and their parents for the sake of their careers, without any mercy, just as they have no mercy for the rabbit they eat at dinner. This nefarious practice is evident in the cases of [New Greatness](#), the Network, and the teenagers in Kansk. One of the [Kansk teenagers](#), 14-year-old Nikita Uvarov, was kept in jail for almost a year. At the age of 16, he was sentenced to five years in prison. For a "terrorist attack" in the computer game Minecraft. Who would you have to be to incarcerate a 14-year-old child? Isn't this modern Gestapo made of monsters? Can they be called human beings?

The other text that my charge was based on is what I wrote when I was in shock over the verdict in the so-called "Kaliningrad case." If you have forgotten, two newlyweds were [sentenced](#) to 12 and 13 years in prison because an FSB agent who was a guest at their wedding didn't behave properly [he was photographed with guests –MT]. Barely a day after they got married, the newlyweds were handed down these brutal sentences. How should I feel about our Gestapo officers after that?

I must also add that in [the case against "Network,"](#) [a group of young left-wing activists –MT] the young men admitted their guilt while being tortured by tasers. The judges chose to ignore that fact. When you look at the geography of these cases and the obedience of the courts, I have to conclude that these cannibalistic, monstrous acts are, in fact, standard practice, not isolated cases.

What should I feel for the people who work in this heinous agency? Great respect and puppy love?

What feelings should I have toward this agency after the poisonings of [Navalny](#), [Kara-Murza](#), and a series of others by a special group of service killers who [travel around the country](#) looking for their victims? Are these the same men with "ardent hearts and clean hands" [Soviet security service founder Felix Dzhherzhinsky's description of agents –MT]?

Embed:

Активист Михаил Кригер поет «Червону калину» в «аквариуме» суда

Пристав: «Уважаемый, можно потише?»

Кригер: «А я уже все спел»

Только что прокурор запросил Кригеру 9 лет лишения свободы за антивоенные посты в фейсбуке pic.twitter.com/Wa7ocURRxz

— SOTA (@Sota_Vision) [May 16, 2023](#)

Knowing all the things I have listed, tell me how I should feel about this organization of executioners, sadists, murderers and snitches? And why don't I have the right to share my disgust with others? Doesn't Article 29 of the Constitution guarantee me the right to disseminate information openly available?

I think I have made a good case for my position on both charges.

This is also why I think [Mikhail Zhlobitsky](#) is a hero [he detonated a bomb at the Arkhangelsk FSB building –MT], even though I do not justify terrorism and I am a principled opponent of terror. Did Putin's government leave him any way to protest other than a suicide bombing? Did the judges note the traces of taser torture on the body of defendant Filinkov during the court hearing? And how many deputies of the State Duma queried the Investigative Committee or Prosecutor's Office about this case? Did Channel One or Channel Two say anything about the five-year sentence handed down to the teenager Uvarov? So, what was left for heroic truth-teller Zhlobitsky? What forms of protest are left for someone if the "ashes of Klaas" burn his heart? Only the "madness of the brave," as Maxim Gorky wrote...

I will say a few more words. At my hearings, my numerous administrative detentions were repeatedly mentioned, apparently as aggravating circumstances. Perhaps the prosecution thought this would characterize me negatively in some way.

But I never went out to protest just for fun or out of boredom. It was always and only in defense of the rule of law and in strict accordance with the Constitution. Article 31 guarantees all of us the right to peaceful assembly.

Let me say more. I considered going out on the street not only a right, but also an obligation of citizens to protect their civil rights. And I often forced myself to do so, overcoming my own laziness, fatigue, and other circumstances.

And, distinguished judges, prosecutors, and investigators, I defended your rights as well. So that you may choose the people in power responsible to you. And so that when they pass a law, your elected deputies think first of all about your reaction, your approval or disapproval. So that they would somehow depend on you. So that your sons, brothers, fathers and husbands are not taken off to fight in this criminal war and returned to you in a body bag. It seems to me that your stake in this is as great as mine. Only you are more afraid.

For these good intentions I have been detained, fined and imprisoned many times.

A few more words.

I address everyone who hears me and everyone who reads my words here. If you ever hear or read that "Krieger had second thoughts," or "Krieger recanted and apologized" and so on, know that there is a dire threat to my family or me.

And the very last thing before I go — I want to say a few words to my heroic fellow countrymen [in Ukrainian] — defenders of my native Ukraine.

Dear Ukrainians! My dear friends!

The worst thing for me is that I can't be with you. In the ranks of the armed forces, for example.

Therefore, I can only wish you victory!

Good luck to you, brothers and sisters!

Glory to Ukraine!

The views expressed in opinion pieces do not necessarily reflect the position of The Moscow Times.

Original url:

<https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2023/05/18/opposition-activist-mikhail-kriegers-final-statement-to-russian-court-a81182>