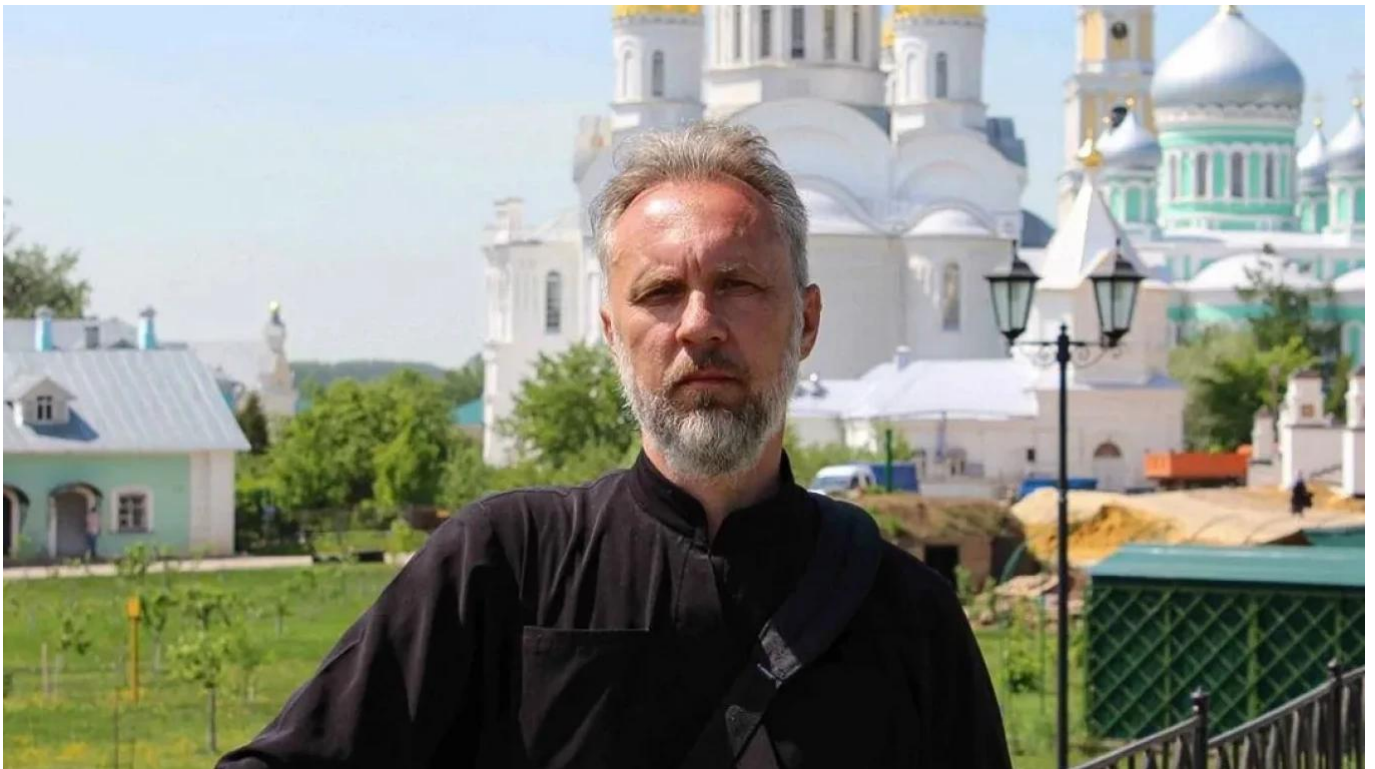


Russian Ex-Priest Who Criticized Ukraine Offensive Jailed

By [AFP](#)

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Ioann Kurmoyarov **VK**

A defrocked Russian priest who spoke out against Moscow's offensive in Ukraine was jailed for three years Thursday, after a court found him guilty of spreading "fake news" about the army.

The Russian Orthodox Church, led by Patriarch Kirill — an ally of President Vladimir Putin — has mostly backed the Kremlin's offensive and often portrays it in religious terms.

But some clergy have spoken out against Moscow's role in the conflict.

Ioann Kurmoyarov, who ran a YouTube channel called the "Orthodox Virtual Parish," was charged after allegedly posting "several videos with false information about the use of the Russian army."

"Kurmoyarov fully admitted his guilt and repented," the court said in a statement Thursday.

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It said he would serve his three-year sentence in a general regime correctional facility and would be banned from posting on the internet for two years.

Kurmoyarov had already been stripped of his priesthood in April 2022, according to rights group Amnesty International.

Russia has led an unprecedented crackdown on dissent as troops fight in Ukraine.

Moscow has outlawed public opposition to the conflict, jailing or fining dozens of dissidents.

Most opposition figures have either fled Russia or are behind bars, and thousands of ordinary Russians have been detained for protesting against the Ukraine campaign.

Patriarch Kirill has repeatedly defended Moscow's actions in Ukraine, and last year said President Vladimir Putin's rule had been mandated by God.

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