

Ukrainian Soldier Jailed 20 Years in Russia After Crimea Operation

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Oleksandr Lyubas. **Video grab**

A military court in southern Russia sentenced a Ukrainian special forces soldier to 20 years in prison after he was captured during a mission in annexed Crimea, federal prosecutors [said](#) Tuesday.

Oleksandr Lyubas was [captured](#) in October during an amphibious operation in which Ukrainian military intelligence soldiers reportedly arrived in Crimea on jet skis, unfurled a Ukrainian flag and [declared](#) that “Crimea will be Ukrainian.”

Russian state media [reported](#) that Lyubas was apprehended after falling into the water from a jet ski.

The Southern Military District Court in Rostov-on-Don convicted Lyubas of terrorism, arms smuggling and illegally crossing the Russian border. He was sentenced to 20 years in a maximum-security prison.

Lyubas [denied](#) the charges, saying in court that he should be treated as a prisoner of war.

“I’m a simple soldier and should be considered a prisoner of war under international law,” the Memorial human rights group quoted him as saying.

Kyiv has repeatedly vowed to take back Crimea, which Russia annexed in 2014.

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