

Russia Begins Second Trial Against Ukraine War Denouncer

By [AFP](#)

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Alexei Gorinov holds up a piece of paper that reads: "We've had enough killing. Let's stop the war."

SOTAvision / Telegram

Russia on Wednesday put a former Moscow councilor, who became one of the first critics of the Kremlin's war in Ukraine to be jailed, back on trial for criticizing the military offensive while in prison.

Alexei Gorinov was the first known Russian to be jailed under new censorship laws in 2022 that accompanied Moscow's invasion.

More than two years later, Gorinov was brought for a new trial on accusations of "justifying terrorism," a move that will likely see his seven-year sentence extended.

He went on trial at a military court in the city of Vladimir, accused of public justification and "propaganda" of terrorism, punishable by up to five years in prison.

The new case is based on testimony from prisoners with whom he shared a prison hospital ward while being treated for pneumonia.

Prosecutors said he justified Ukrainian attacks on the Crimean Bridge and the actions of the Azov battalion, banned as a "terrorist group" in Russia, and the Kraken special forces unit.

In the defendant's cage, Gorinov held up a piece of paper that read: "We've had enough killing. Let's stop the war."

The white-haired ex-councilor said the new trial was part of Russian authorities "persecuting citizens for voicing their opinion about the war," according to the Mediazona website.

"I have nothing to do with your 'terrorism' and never have done," he said.

He claimed he was placed in a ward with repeat offenders who asked his view on television news and recorded their conversations.

Mediazona reported that the prosecution called witnesses including a convicted robber and a convicted rapist.

In July 2022, Gorinov was sentenced to seven years in jail after chiding colleagues at a council meeting for planning a children's drawing competition while the invasion of Ukraine was underway.

He was found guilty of "knowingly spreading false information about the actions of the Russian army," becoming the first person to be sentenced for this new offense.

The human rights group Memorial has classed Gorinov as a political prisoner.

With concerns over his state of health, his supporters hoped he would be freed in a major prisoner swap in August this year.

"Gorinov is completely unbending," an opposition politician freed in the swap, Ilya Yashin, said on social media.

The next hearing will be held Thursday.

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