

Russian Jazz Musician Sentenced to 6 Years in Prison for Anti-War Facebook Posts

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Andrei Shabanov. SOTAvision

A Russian jazz musician suffering from a serious autoimmune disease and spinal condition was sentenced to six years in prison for anti-war and anti-Putin Facebook posts, a group of his supporters <u>said</u> Wednesday.

Saxophonist Andrei Shabanov, who is legally disabled, was arrested in March on <u>accusations</u> of calling for financial support for the Ukrainian military, committing acts of sabotage and joining pro-Ukrainian military units.

Shabanov has psoriatic arthritis, an autoimmune disease affecting the skin and joints. At a court hearing last year, he <u>stripped down</u> to his underwear to show lesions on his body, telling the court that joint damage he had suffered while in custody would leave him unable to ever play music again.

A military court in the southern city of Samara found Shabanov guilty of justifying terrorism and calling for actions against national security. In addition to the six-year prison term, the court barred him from managing websites for three years.

Prosecutors had initially sought an eight-year sentence.

Shabanov <u>pleaded</u> guilty at an earlier hearing and again during his closing <u>statement</u> Wednesday.

In March 2022, during the early days of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, he was <u>fined</u> for posting Adolf Hitler's portrait on the website of an online project commemorating World War II veterans.

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