

Russian Court Jails Exiled Journalist Kirill Martynov 6 Years in Absentia

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Kirill Martynov. **Andrew Rushailo-Arno / Facebook**

A Moscow court has sentenced exiled Russian journalist Kirill Martynov to six years in prison in absentia for involvement in an “undesirable” organization, Novaya Gazeta Europe, where he serves as editor-in-chief, [reported](#) Tuesday.

Martynov is the co-founder of the Latvia-based [Novaya Gazeta Europe](#) and the independent online [Free University](#). Russian authorities labeled both organizations as “undesirable” in 2023.

The “undesirable” designation bans targeted organizations from operating inside the country, criminalizes cooperation with them and puts staff at risk of prosecution.

Russian investigators [pressed](#) criminal charges against Martynov last year but did not specify whether they stemmed from his involvement with one or both organizations.

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On Tuesday, Moscow's Basmanny District Court found him guilty of organizing the activities of an "undesirable" group and sentenced him to six years in prison, to be served if he is extradited or returns to Russia. Prosecutors had requested a seven-year sentence.

Martynov has vowed to appeal the verdict, according to Novaya Gazeta Europe.

Russia introduced its law on "undesirable" organizations in 2015 to target foreign NGOs. Authorities have since expanded its use to crack down on independent media, human rights groups, environmental advocates and academic institutions.

The Moscow Times was designated an "undesirable" organization last July.

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