

[UA] Russian cultural figure sentenced in absentia for war propaganda

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On 13 November 2024, the city court in the regional centre of Vinnytsia in Ukraine convicted, in absentia, a popular Russian film/theatre actor and director, Vladimir Meshkov, for propaganda for war and an attempt to violate the territorial integrity of Ukraine. He was sentenced to ten years of imprisonment (including three years imprisonment for propaganda for war, the maximum penalty envisioned by the criminal code), as well as confiscation of his property, in particular Mashkov's seaside apartment in Odesa. Mr. Mashkov is also a public figure in Russia, as he has held, since December 2023, the position of the chair of the Union of Theatre Workers, the national guild of theatre actors.

The Vinnytsia Investigative Department of the regional branch of the Security Service of Ukraine subpoenaed – through the *Uryadovyi kurier* (the national daily newspaper published by the executive branch of Ukraine) – Mr Mashkov to attend an interrogation, to no effect. Ukraine has issued a national and international warrant for Mr Mashkov. The court found proof that all available means to inform the accused on the court trial had been used.

The Vinnytsia city court found the calls for war of aggression in recordings of the public speech made by Mr. Mashkov at the Olympic Stadium in Moscow on 18 March 2022. The accused, said the court's verdict, was aware that the event, a rally-cum-concert to mark the anniversary of Crimea's annexation by Russia, was being transmitted live on a channel in YouTube, which is considered a mass media in Ukraine. The court found particular expressions of public calls for waging an aggressive war against Ukraine in "motivational constructs" such as "We stand for our Army!" "We shall win!" "To victory!" taken in the context of the entire message of his speech.

Back in 2023, the Shevchenkivsky district court in Kyiv had already sentenced, also in absentia, a Russian presenter of the talk show to five years imprisonment with confiscation of property for public calls to overthrow the constitutional order of Ukraine and dissemination of such calls in the mass media, as well as for public calls to genocide and dissemination of such calls (For more details see: IRIS 2023-4:1/29)

Вінницький міський суд, вирок

<https://reyestr.court.gov.ua/Review/123006255>

Verdict, City court of Vinnytsia, case No. 127/10902/24, 13 November 2024

Criminal Code of Ukraine, 2001, N 2341-III, Art. 436

