



UK Outraged After 2 British ‘Mercenaries’ Handed Death Sentences By Pro-Russian Donetsk Court

Description

RUSSIA/UKRAINE: Initially reports suggested that a pair of captured British foreign fighters in Russian military custody [faced](#) 20 years in jail, but the final ruling in what Western observers have condemned as a “show trial” has ended up shockingly worse. On Thursday 28-year old Aiden Aslin and 48-year old Shaun Pinner have been sentenced to death by a court in the pro-Russian breakaway republic of Donetsk.

The British nationals had been serving in the Ukrainian military, but were captured in April while fighting in now Russian-conquered Mariupol. They appeared in a Donetsk court this week on charges of “**terrorism**” and “**being a mercenary**”. On Wednesday Russian state RIA Novosti aired footage of the men pleading “guilty” to the crimes, which critics say was coerced. A captured Moroccan national fighting for the Ukrainians, Saaudun Brahim, was also sentenced to death in the same proceedings.

? court in separatist-held Donetsk region has reportedly sentenced two British men and a Moroccan man who were fighting for Ukrainian forces to death. pic.twitter.com/qTHgrSeyYc

— Mike Eckel (@Mike_Eckel) [June 9, 2022](#)

Aslin’s family has rejected the “mercenary” accusation given he was in the Ukrainian Marines. A family statement said he “is not, contrary to the Kremlin’s propaganda, a volunteer, a mercenary, or a spy.” Further they said pro-Russian forces violated the Geneva conventions as they released a video of him “speaking under duress and having clearly suffered physical injuries.”

The Russian-owned news agency RIA Novosti said on Telegram: “The Supreme Court of the DPR passed the first sentence on mercenaries – the British Aiden Aslin and Sean Pinner and the Moroccan Saadun Brahim were sentenced to death, RIA Novosti correspondent reports from the courtroom.”

*The Interfax news agency said the three men were tried for “mercenarism” and activities “**aimed at seizing power and toppling the constitutional order**” of Donetsk. —[UK Express](#)*

After their capture in April, both men appeared on Russian state TV **pleading for UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson to negotiate their release**. DPR authorities claimed they had committed “monstrous” crimes against the people.

Pinner and Aiden during that prior appearance spoke at the prompting of an unidentified man in the footage, and requested that Johnson bring them home **in exchange for pro-Russian politician Viktor Medvedchuk**, who is being held by the Ukrainian side after Zelensky ordered the opposition leader’s arrest.



Via Sky News

Thus this latest shock death sentence pronouncement may be **intended as leverage and to put pressure on the UK government** to see the proposed prisoner exchange through. Regardless, Johnson and British leaders are going to be outraged over the death penalty sentencing.

An initial statement from London within hours of the verdict said the UK is “deeply concerned” over death sentences for British fighters in Ukraine. The UK intends to file protest, also given that the DPR court is not internationally recognized. A government [statement said](#):

*“We are obviously deeply concerned by this. We have said continually that prisoners of war shouldn’t be **exploited for political purposes**.*

*You will know that under the Geneva Convention prisoners of war are **entitled to combatant immunity and they should not be prosecuted for participation in hostilities***

So we will continue to work with the Ukrainian authorities to try and secure the release of any British nationals who were serving in the Ukrainian armed forces and who are being held as prisoners of war.”

Western and Ukrainian media have slammed the “sham trial” of the men.

Brit fighters Shaun Pinner, 48, and Aiden Aslin, 28, are ‘sentenced to death’ by pro-Russian court after sham trial <https://t.co/RNDVIOsg2h> pic.twitter.com/NJet0ZyAsv

— Daily Mail Online (@MailOnline) [June 9, 2022](#)

Pinner previously served as a British Army soldier before moving to Ukraine four years ago, after which he enlisted in Ukraine’s national army. Likely the Kremlin also intends the extreme sentencing to serve as a warning and message to other foreign fighters volunteering to defend Ukraine, which are commonly estimated to be in the many thousands.

by Tyler Durden

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