

Table of Contents

- ***A lawyer in pretrial detention for a post about the shelling of a hypermarket in Kharkiv***
- ***Freedom of expression remains under severe pressure***
- ***Mapping the whereabouts of 2,510 Ukrainian prisoners of war***
- ***How Russia silences critical coverage of its war in Ukraine***
- ***Over 80 European media outlets banned from broadcasting***
- ***Ukrainian children deported to Russia listed on adoption websites***
- ***U.S. journalist pretrial detention postponed by three months***
- ***After Navalny's death, the repression is alive and well***
- ***Do not forget Navalny: over 500,000 Russians watched the funeral online***
- ***Human rights defender Oleg Orlov (70) jailed***
- ***EU sanctions against the head of Belarus' Red Cross***

A lawyer in pretrial detention for a post about the shelling of a hypermarket in Kharkiv

[OVD-Info](#) (09.11.2024) - The Central District Court of Volgograd arrested lawyer Ruslan Nurushev for a publication in "VKontakte" about the strike with air bombs on the construction hypermarket "Epicenter" in Kharkiv. This was reported to OVD-Info by lawyer Eduard Yapparov.

Nurushev was sent to the pre-trial detention center until January 1, 2025. The defense petitioned for house arrest.

The man is [accused of](#) an article about "fakes" about the Russian army motivated by political hatred or enmity (paragraph "e" of Part 2 of Art. 207.3 of the Criminal Code). Nurushev does not deny the authorship of the post, but does not see it as a crime and does not admit guilt.

On March 24, on the air of the Volgograd-1 TV channel, producer Sergei Mazanov and ex-deputy Roman Potolovsky [published the](#) names of 15 Volgograd residents who laid flowers at the action in memory of Alexei Navalny from February 16 to March 1. Activists [filed a](#) complaint with the police, but the Investigative Committee said that they found no signs of a crime in the disclosure of personal data.

Nurushev participated in filing a complaint. On June 12, he and other activists [were](#) searched. On the same day, [the](#) court [fined the](#) lawyer 50 thousand rubles under the article on disrespect for the authorities (Part 3 of Art. 20.1 Administrative Code) because of the "Putin rhyme" and other publications in VKontakte. In October, the man complained that the equipment seized during the search had never been returned to him.

- Since February 24, 2022 - the first day of a full-scale invasion of Ukraine - residents of Russian cities go to anti-war actions every day and talk about the tragedy online. Anti-war speeches and statements become a reason for criminal prosecution. At the moment, more than 1,050 people have become defendants in criminal cases initiated because of the protest against the war with Ukraine. Read more about this in our [infographics](#).
- Article 207.3 (Public dissemination of knowingly false information about the use of the armed forces of the Russian Federation) [was included](#) in the Criminal Code in March 2022 - thus the authorities reacted to anti-war speeches and statements, as well as the dissemination of information about the war that does not come from official Russian sources. The maximum penalty under the article is 15 years of imprisonment.

Freedom of expression remains under severe pressure

Oral Statement at the OSCE Warsaw Human Dimension Conference and Recommendations

SOVA CENTER (02.10.2024) - Throughout 2024, freedom of expression in Russia has remained under severe pressure, continuing a trend observed over the past two years.

Internet control has intensified, with platforms facing increased blocking and significant slowdowns. Nearly all independent media websites are now blocked, and most social networks are inaccessible without VPNs. As of August, the dissemination of certain information can be banned by presidential decree, bypassing the need for legislation.

Restrictions on information dissemination now extend to new groups. For instance, the designation of the 'international LGBT movement' as an extremist organization has made public statements defending LGBT rights extremely risky. Such statements now potentially fall under the Criminal Code article regarding the continuation of banned organization activities.

Migrants face increasingly strict limitations on critical speech. Individuals who have been granted citizenship risk losing it if their statements are deemed extremist. A proposed bill under consideration would allow for the deportation of foreigners for any so-called 'political' administrative offenses.

The interpretation of participation in an 'extremist community' continues to broaden. This charge is now being leveled against the lawyers of Alexei Navalny, an opposition leader who died in custody, as well as journalists who covered Navalny-related events.

Criminal prosecution persists for pro-Ukrainian, anti-war, and oppositional statements, even the ones containing no calls for or justification of violence.

The article on propaganda and justification of terrorism is the one most frequently invoked. While some incriminating statements indeed called for or justified violent actions, the real public danger of these statements is often not assessed and is frequently very low. Charges of justifying terrorism can also be brought for statements that in no way endorsed violence, as demonstrated by the infamous cases of theater director Evgenia Berkovich and playwright Svetlana Petrychuk.

Courts are increasingly imposing actual prison sentences for criminal offenses related to public statements. The average length of these prison terms is also rising. A single disloyal statement about military actions can now result in imprisonment for five years or more.

This year, courts have imposed sanctions under administrative offense articles related to public statements more than four and a half thousand times. Many of these sanctions were clearly inappropriate. They targeted actions such as discrediting or insulting officials or military personnel, making hostile remarks against them, displaying Ukrainian symbols, and similar offenses.

We reiterate our call for Russia to lift the numerous restrictions on freedom of expression imposed in recent years and to release hundreds of individuals imprisoned for speech that poses no significant threat. Our detailed recommendations to ODIHR and participating States have been submitted in writing.

Recommendations

To the participating states:

1. Bring national legislations and practices related to countering terrorism and extremism in line with the international human rights standards.
2. Ensure that the definitions of terrorist and extremist activity in relevant laws are as clear as possible to eliminate the chance for an expansive interpretation.
3. Revise the legal definition of extremism in national legislations, if present so that this concept refers only to actions connected in one way or another with the use of violence.
4. Ensure that freedom of conscience and belief as such is not subject to additional restrictions within the framework of anti-terrorism or anti-extremist legislation.
5. Ensure that criminal law articles relating to public statements criminalize only statements that call for discrimination and violence. Incitement to hatred based on group characteristics – such as race, ethnicity, religion, etc – may be an exception. The list of protected characteristics should not include any vague criteria, as the lack of clarity leads to abuse.
6. Ensure that the expression of various political or especially religious viewpoints regarding the desirable societal structure is not restricted merely because these perspectives are politically and ethically unacceptable to the majority of society. This includes opinions about the structure and policies of the state, its borders, approaches to managing cultural diversity, family matters, and more. Punishment should only be applied when unlawful methods, especially violent means, are used to achieve these ideals or when there are public calls to employ such methods, including incitement to hatred based on ethnic, religious, or similar criteria.
7. Ensure that public associations and media outlets are only prohibited by a court for extremist activities based on legally effective judgments against their participants, provided that this activity has not been an isolated incident. Criminal prosecution for the continued activities of such associations should only be considered if the actions in question were connected to or aimed at committing crimes of extremist or terrorist nature.

8. Ensure that the prohibition of a public association – as a measure affecting a wide range of individuals, aside from those proven to have committed crimes is only enforced based on genuinely serious claims against the association.

9. Ensure that the wording and application of the relevant criminal code articles meet the threshold of public danger of the statements in question. The criteria presented in the six-part test in the Rabat Plan of Action on the prohibition of advocacy of hatred can be used as guidelines.

10. Ensure that prohibitions on the public display of specific symbols and the imposition of penalties for such actions are imposed solely in instances where these actions have been intended to incite hatred or other forms of socially dangerous provocations, or to promote organizations that have been banned for engaging in terrorist or extremist activities

11. Repeal the restrictions of historical debates if present in national legislations.

12. Repeal the mechanism of prohibiting “information materials” along with subsequent penalties for their dissemination *per se*, if present. With widespread internet availability, such prohibitions fail to effectively curtail socially harmful propaganda and often lack clear definitions, thereby significantly increasing the risk of excessive or arbitrary penalties. A first step should involve repealing any legal consequences for possessing such materials in countries where such regulations exist.

13. Ensure that blocking access to materials on the internet is exclusively applied to content that violates the law (as brought into compliance with the recommendations outlined above). The illegality of materials should either be determined by a separate court decision or declared by an executive authority based on the material being deemed illegal in the context of a previously reviewed criminal case.

14. Elaborate balanced and accurate approaches to cooperation with media platforms concerning the online content regulation.

15. Ensure that investigations and trials related to cases classified as terrorist or extremist are conducted while preserving the procedural rights of the accused, including trial transparency (with generally accepted exceptions). Imposing additional restrictions on the rights of the accused, including the use of torture, is unacceptable in such cases.

16. Review previously issued court decisions in order to secure the release of citizens who have already been convicted from unlawful or excessive penalties, primarily those who are deprived of their liberty.

To ODIHR:

17. Update the OSCE recommendations related to countering terrorism and extremism in view of the latest developments of national legislations and the human rights obligations of the OSCE member states.

18. Mediate a constructive dialogue between the participating states in all diversity of their anticipations and the global online platforms to elaborate more balanced and effective policies of online content regulation.

Mapping the whereabouts of 2,510 Ukrainian prisoners of war

The T4P website now has live statistics on the locations where Ukrainians are being held in Russia and the temporarily occupied territory.

[Kharkiv Human Rights Protection Group](#) (19.08.2024) - Thanks to the [statistics](#), you can find data on the places of detention, addresses, and number of Ukrainian citizens there. This data is collected by T4P documenters and is updated daily.

The Kharkiv Human Rights Protection Group, a co-founder of the T4P initiative, has the last names, first names, and patronymics of 2,510 prisoners: military and civilian. We respond to family inquiries about the whereabouts of their loved ones if we know it and try to find them if it is unknown.

You can contact our [hotline](#) regarding missing or detained civilians and prisoners of war. Over the years of our work, we have managed to find more than 30% of the people reported to us.

In addition, the T4P initiative website already has [live statistics](#) of war crimes committed by Russian troops in Ukraine, [submissions](#) to the Office of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, [photo collections](#), [eyewitness accounts](#) of the war, and many [analytics](#). All materials are available in seven languages.

Footnote

T4P is a global initiative created by Ukrainian NGOs in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, which has been accompanied by a large number of war crimes from the very beginning. The goal of T4P is to collect data on Russia's crimes for future trials.

How Russia silences critical coverage of its war in Ukraine

By [Anna Brakha](#)

[CPJ](#) (10.08.2024) - Russia's months-long jailing of [journalists Evan Gershkovich and Alsu Kurmasheva](#) — [released](#) on August 1 as part of a prisoner exchange — was one of the most blatant illustrations of Russia's muzzling of the press in the wake of its February 2022 full-scale [invasion](#) of Ukraine. The war has precipitated what a representative of the [now-shuttered](#) Russian Journalists' and Media Workers' Union (JMWU) — speaking anonymously due to security concerns — calls the "biggest press freedom crisis in Russia's recent history."

Advocates estimate that [hundreds](#) of Russian journalists have fled into exile, where some continue to face [transnational repression](#) such as [arrest warrants](#) and [jail terms in absentia](#). Those who remain are under heavy scrutiny as independent reporting hangs on by a thread.

While practicing journalism in Russia has long been difficult, the government has stepped up efforts to quash the work of the media by passing new anti-press laws, amending others, and expanding censorship efforts. "The overall aim, no doubt, if we're talking about all

these tools, of course it's to muzzle, and they manage to do that, so that people ... self-censor," the JMWU representative told CPJ.

Here are the most common methods Russia has used to silence the press since the war began:

Criminalizing 'fake news' about the war

One of the Russian government's first acts to prevent coverage of the war, in March 2022, was to pass [amendments](#) to the criminal code to punish the distribution of "fake news" about the army. [At least five journalists](#) are imprisoned for allegedly distributing fake information on the military, [one is under house arrest](#), and several others have been charged in absentia. That includes U.S.-Russian journalist and author Masha Gessen; Russia issued an [arrest warrant](#) against Gessen in 2023 for allegedly spreading "fake information" about Russia's [massacre in the Ukrainian city of Bucha](#) in a 2022 interview and [sentenced Gessen](#) to eight years in absentia on July 15, 2024. A week later, on July 23, the Russian authorities [sentenced](#) Mikhail Zygar, the former editor-in-chief of the now-exiled Russian broadcaster Dozhd TV (TV Rain) and a [CPJ 2014 International Press Freedom Awardee](#), to eight-and-a-half years in absentia over an Instagram post about the Bucha massacre.

Russia has used anti-state laws to retaliate against other members of the press, such as the Wall Street Journal's [Evan Gershkovich](#), [convicted](#) on espionage charges, and Russian journalist [Ivan Safronov](#), who is serving a 22-year prison term for treason. Another journalist, [Antonina Favorskaya](#), was charged with participating in an extremist formation after covering the court hearings of late opposition leader [Alexey Navalny](#). Her colleague [Artyom Krieger](#) is currently jailed on similar charges.

Expanding 'foreign agent' and 'undesirable' designations

Russia's "foreign agent" law, first [introduced](#) in 2012 and [extended](#) in 2017 to specifically target media outlets and journalists, originally required recipients of foreign funding to apply a "foreign agent" label to any published material and report their own activities and expenses to the government. Initially seen as a badge of honor and opposition by independent news outlets and journalists, the label has become more burdensome during the war. In March 2024, Russia [banned advertisements](#) on "foreign agent" outlets, [harming](#) the bottom line for many news organizations and YouTube channels. Russia has also made it easier for authorities to impose the "foreign agent" label on individuals and outlets by [removing the requirement](#) that the Ministry of Justice prove foreign funding in July 2022.

According to Dmitrii Anisimov, a spokesperson and campaigner for the human rights news website OVD-Info, as of July 2024, some 268 journalists and media outlets were labeled as "foreign agents" in the country. With the Ukraine war, [journalists](#) have been increasingly fined for [failing](#) to list their status or [submit](#) the required reports, and some even face imprisonment. Prior to her release, [Kurmasheva](#), a U.S.-Russian journalist and an editor for U.S. Congress-funded Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, was detained for more than nine months after being accused of failing to register as a "foreign agent" and later [sentenced to 6-and-a-half years](#) on charges of spreading "fake" news about the Russian army. [Denis Kamalyagin](#), a Russian journalist in exile, is facing two years in jail for not complying with the law, he told CPJ.

Since the war, Russia has also been increasingly applying another label— "undesirable" — to media outlets. Widely considered an escalation of the "foreign agent" label, the "undesirable" label was first [introduced](#) in 2015 to effectively ban organizations registered

abroad from operating in the country. Working for an “undesirable” organization can carry a [six-year](#) prison sentence and administrative fines. It’s also a [crime](#) to distribute content from an [“undesirable”](#) organization or donate to it from inside or outside Russia.

Before the war, the investigative site Proekt was the only media outlet [deemed](#) “undesirable,” but as of July 2024, 20 have been [slapped](#) with the label, according to Anisimov. Between January and June 2024, Russian authorities opened at least 28 media-related cases against individuals for “participation in an undesirable organization,” according to Alexander Borodikhin, a data reporter with independent news outlet Mediazona. Borodikhin told CPJ that of the 28 cases, 12 are against journalists, 14 are against people who reposted [“undesirable” content](#), and two are against journalistic sources.

Maria Epifanova, CEO of Latvia-based Novaya Gazeta Europe, which was [deemed](#) “undesirable” in June 2023, told CPJ that the label impacted the outlet’s work and finances. Freelancers in Russia “have to work in fear, write under pseudonyms,” she said. Anyone who talks to the outlet is also at risk. “We have to hide the names and details that help identify a person. That dramatically influences the credibility of articles,” Epifanova said.

Some outlets can’t survive the designation. HelpDesk media was launched shortly before the full-scale invasion “to show the war in Ukraine through the eyes of ordinary people,” according to the [website](#). On May 20, less than five months after being [labeled](#) “undesirable,” it [announced](#) its closure, saying it did not have enough funds to keep operating.

Revoking media licenses and blocking websites

Some Russian outlets are in danger of losing their government-issued licenses over coverage, particularly since Russia passed a July 2022 [law](#) allowing [authorities](#) to invalidate the registration of media outlets without a court order. According to the [Mass Media Defense Center](#), a Russian group that provides legal aid to journalists and news outlets, as well as other journalists CPJ spoke with, registration has many benefits, including faster responses to requests for comment from officials and eligibility for accreditation to cover official functions

Leading Russian independent news site Novaya Gazeta — not to be confused with Novaya Gazeta Europe, made up of ex-employees of the former who fled the country — had both its [print](#) and [online](#) licenses canceled in September 2022. Nadezhda Prusenkova, the head of the outlet’s press department, told CPJ that the outlet is in survival mode. “No circulation, no advertising, just crowdfunding and [an] online shop. No salary for journalists. No possibility to work officially [from places that require accreditation].”

Some outlets have their content blocked online before they lose their license. Mark Nebesnyi, the editor-in-chief of independent news outlet Svobodnye Media, told CPJ that the Russian state media regulator, Roskomnadzor, blocked its website shortly after the start of the full-scale invasion without any explanation. He believes the blocking was in retaliation for the outlet’s critical reporting on the war, the Russian government, and the outlet’s [investigations](#) into alleged [embezzlement](#) of the state budget. After the blocking, which he said caused a significant economic blow, Svobodnye Media [lost](#) its license in October 2023.

According to Russian independent internet freedom group Roskomsvoboda, more than 18,500 websites had been blocked in connection with their reporting on the war as of May

2024. Many websites pull down their own content in fear of retaliation, Roskomsvoboda [reported](#) last year.

Foreign journalists and their outlets have also faced arbitrary and repressive measures. Several members of the foreign press were forced to leave following the [withdrawal](#) of their accreditation or the [denial](#) of their visa renewals. In late June, the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs [announced](#) that access to 81 European media outlets would be blocked because they spread “false information” about the war.

“[In Russia], independent journalism is still possible. But that’s the problem. You never know how long you’re going to exist and what you’re risking,” the JMWU representative said.

CPJ emailed the Russian investigative committee, the Russian prosecutor general’s office, and media regulator Roskomnadzor for comment on measures against the press, but did not receive any reply.

Over 80 European media outlets banned from broadcasting

In a retaliatory move against restrictions on its own media, Russia has banned the broadcasting of over 80 European media outlets within its territory.

[EU TODAY](#) (25.06.2024) - The decision, announced by the [Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs](#), comes in response to the European Council’s sanctions against three major Russian media organisations: RIA Novosti, Izvestia, and Rossiyskaya Gazeta.

The European Council’s [decision](#), made on 17 May, prohibited any broadcasting activities by these Russian media outlets across the European Union.

The sanctions, effective from 25 June, prompted Moscow to impose reciprocal restrictions.

“In response to the European Council’s decision on 17 May to ban any broadcasting activities by three Russian media outlets (RIA Novosti, Izvestia, and Rossiyskaya Gazeta), which comes into effect on 25 June, countermeasures are being introduced to restrict access from the Russian Federation’s territory to the broadcasting resources of a number of media outlets from EU member states,” the Russian Foreign Ministry stated.

The [ban affects 81 media organisations from 25 European countries](#). Prominent among these are Germany’s Der Spiegel and Die Zeit, the pan-European Politico and euobserver, Poland’s Belsat, Lithuania’s LRT, and France’s Agence France-Presse (AFP).

This sweeping prohibition marks a significant escalation in the ongoing media war between Russia and the European Union, reflecting the deepening rift in relations. The European Council’s initial sanctions were part of broader measures aimed at countering Russian disinformation and propaganda efforts, particularly in the context of the ongoing Russo-Ukrainian war.

The Russian government has justified its response as a necessary measure to protect its informational sovereignty and ensure a balanced media landscape within its borders.

The Kremlin has long accused Western media of bias and propagating anti-Russian sentiment, claims that have intensified in recent years.

The affected European media outlets have expressed concern over the ban, highlighting its impact on the free flow of information and the ability of Russian citizens to access diverse perspectives.

Many of these organisations play a crucial role in providing independent news coverage, and their exclusion is seen as a further narrowing of the already restricted Russian media environment.

Russian authorities have indicated that the ban may be reconsidered if the European Council lifts its restrictions on Russian media.

"Should the restrictions against Russian media be lifted, the Russian side will also review its decision regarding the mentioned media operators," the Foreign Ministry added.

The European Union has yet to respond to Russia's latest move, but it is likely to provoke further debate on the balance between national security and media freedom. The initial sanctions against RIA Novosti, Izvestia, and Rossiyskaya Gazeta were part of a broader strategy to combat what the EU perceives as systematic disinformation campaigns originating from Russia, aimed at undermining European stability and democratic processes.

List of Banned Media Outlets

Austria

1. ORF (orf.at)
2. Osterreich (oe24.at)

Belgium

3. Le Vif (levif.be)
4. Knack (knack.be)

Bulgaria

5. Mediapool (Mediapool.bg)
6. 24 Chasa (24chasa.bg)

Hungary

7. 444.hu

Germany

8. Der Spiegel (spiegel.de)
9. Die Zeit (zeit.de)
10. Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (faz.net)

Greece

11. ERT (ert.gr, ertnews.gr)
12. Skai (skai.gr)
13. Mega (Megatv.com)
14. Proto Thema (protothema.gr)

Denmark

15. Berlingske (berlingske.dk)
16. Information (information.dk)

Ireland

17. RTE (rte.ie)
18. The Irish Times (irishtimes.com)
19. The Irish Independent (independent.ie)

Spain

20. El Mundo (elmundo.es)
21. El Pais (elpais.com)
22. EFE (efe.com)
23. Televisión Española (rtve.es)

Italy

24. LA7 (la7.it)
25. La Stampa (lastampa.it)
26. La Repubblica (repubblica.it)
27. RAI (rai.it, rainews.it)

Cyprus

28. Politis (politis.com.cy)
29. Cyprus Times (cyprustimes.com)
30. Cyprus Mail (cyprus-mail.com)

Latvia

31. Latvian Television and Latvian Radio 4 (lsm.lv)
32. apollo.lv
33. tvnet.lv
34. Diena (diena.lv)

Lithuania

35. LRT (lrt.lt)
36. 15min.lt
37. lrytas.lt

Malta

38. TVM (tvmnews.mt)
39. Times of Malta (timesofmalta.com)
40. The Malta Independent (independent.com.mt)
41. Malta Today (maltatoday.com.mt)

Netherlands

42. Nos (nos.nl)
43. Nrc (nrc.nl)
44. Algemeen Dagblad (ad.nl)

Poland

45. Belsat (belsat.eu, belsat.pl)
46. Nowa Polska (novayapolsha.eu, novayapolsha.com, novayapolsha.pl)

Portugal

47. RTP Internacional (rtp.pt)
48. Publico (publico.pt)
49. Expresso (expresso.pt)
50. Observador (observador.pt)

Romania

51. Pro TV International (stirileprotv.ro, protv.ro)
52. Digi24 (digi24.ro)
53. B1TV (b1tv.ro)

Slovakia

54. SME (sme.sk)
55. Dennik N (dennikn.sk)

Slovenia

56. Nova24 (Nova24.si, Nova24tv.si)
57. Demokracija (Demokracija.si, Demokracija.eu)

Finland

58. Ilta-Sanomat (is.fi)
59. Iltalehti (iltalehti.fi)
60. Helsingin Sanomat (hs.fi)
61. Yleisradio (yle.fi)

France

62. LCI (tf1info.fr)
63. Le Monde (lemonde.fr)
64. La Croix (la-croix.com)
65. Liberation (liberation.fr)
66. Lexpress (lexpress.fr)
67. Radio France (radiofrance.fr)
68. Agence France-Presse (afp.com, afpforum.com)
69. CNews (cnews.fr)
70. Arte (arte.tv)

Czech Republic

- 71. Ceska Televize (ceskatelevize.cz)
- 72. Seznam Zpravy (seznamzpravy.cz)

Sweden

- 73. SVT (svt.se)
- 74. Sveriges Radio (sverigesradio.se)

Estonia

- 75. propastop.org
- 76. ERR (err.ee)
- 77. Delfi (delfi.ee)

Pan-European Media

- 78. Agence Europe (agenceurope.eu)
 - 79. Politico (www.politico.eu, www.politico.com)
 - 80. Svoboda Satellite Package (rsf.org)
 - 81. Euobserver (Euobserver.com)
-

Ukrainian children deported to Russia listed on adoption websites

[Euromaidan](#) (13.06.2024) - In March last year, the International Criminal Court issued warrants for the arrest of Russian leader Vladimir Putin and Children's Commissioner Maria Lvova-Belova on war crimes charges related to the abduction of Ukrainian children.

An investigation by the Financial Times has revealed that images and personal details of Ukrainian children, who were deported to Russia during the early months of the 2022 invasion, are appearing on adoption websites linked to the Russian government.

Using image recognition tools, public records, and interviews with Ukrainian officials and the children's relatives, the newspaper identified four Ukrainian children on usynovite.ru.

One child is listed under a new Russian name and a different age from their [Ukrainian](#) documents, while another was listed under a Russian version of their Ukrainian name. There is no mention of their Ukrainian background.

These children were taken from state care homes in towns across southern and eastern Ukraine, which came under Russian control in 2022. Ages of the children range from eight to 15 years old.

Tracked by the FT, these children have ended up in regions near Moscow, such as Tula, and close to the Kazakh border in Orenburg. One child was taken to occupied Crimea.

Seventeen more matches found by the FT on the adoption website were confirmed as Ukrainian children in a recent New York Times investigation, all of them from a Kherson children's home.

The Kremlin did not respond to requests for comment on these findings.

According to Ukrainian authorities, nearly 20,000 children have been forcibly taken to Russia from occupied territories since 2022 and only 389 returned back home.

Read more:

- [NYT: Russians illegally move Ukrainian children from Kherson foster home to annexed Crimea](#)
- [Newborns held hostage: Luhansk occupation authorities force citizens to obtain Russian in exchange for their children](#)
- <https://www.kyivpost.com/post/34201>
- <https://kyivindependent.com/ft-russia-posts-abducted-ukrainian-children-on-government-linked-adoption-sites/>
- <https://euromaidanpress.com/2024/06/13/ft-ukrainian-children-deported-to-russia-listed-on-adoption-websites-with-false-identities/>
- <https://united24media.com/latest-news/ft-investigation-unveils-ukrainian-children-stolen-by-russia-for-adoption-705>
- <https://www.ukrinform.net/rubric-society/3874306-russians-post-photos-of-abducted-ukrainian-children-on-adoption-websites-ft.html>

Some of HRWF Publications

HRWF Reports in English, Russian, Ukrainian

15 December 2023

[RUSSIA/ UKRAINE: Ukrainian children un search of a way home from Russia/ HRWF Report submitted to the UN Committee for the Rights of the Child \(15 December 2023\)](#)
 Versions in Russian and in Ukrainian: [HERE](#)
 – See UN Website: bit.ly/3Rz46iu

23 March 2023

[Ордер МУС на арест Владимира Путина и Марии Львово-Беловой за военные преступления](#) RU/EN (23.03.2023) / [ICC arrest warrants for Vladimir Putin and Maria Lvova-Belova for war crimes](#) (23.03.2023)

27 February 2023

[РОССИЯ-матушка: Мария Львова-Белова, союзница Путина, депортирующая украинских детей](#) RU/ EN (27.02.2023) / [RUSSIA: Mother Russia: Maria Lvova-Belova, Putin's ally deporting Ukrainian children](#) (27.02.2023)

20 February 2023

[РОССИЯ вывезла тысячи украинских детей](#) RU/ EN (20.02.2023)/ [RUSSIA deports thousands of Ukrainian children](#) (20.02.2023)

U.S. journalist pretrial detention postponed by three months

After fifth detention extension, CPJ renews call for Russia to release US journalist Evan Gershkovich

[CPJ](#) (26.03.2024)—The Committee to Protect Journalists calls on Russia to immediately release U.S. journalist [Evan Gershkovich](#) following Tuesday's [court decision](#) to extend his pretrial detention until June 30, 2024.

“CPJ strongly condemns the three-month extension of Evan Gershkovich’s detention, just days before the one-year anniversary of his arrest on fabricated charges. Today’s ruling is yet another cynical affront to press freedom by the Russian authorities,” said Gulnoza Said, CPJ’s Europe and Central Asia program coordinator. “Russian authorities must immediately release Gershkovich, drop all charges against him, and stop prosecuting reporters for their work.”

The [Moscow court’s decision](#) to approve the Federal Security Service’s (FSB) request marks the fifth extension of [The Wall Street Journal](#) reporter’s detention since his arrest on March 29, 2023, on espionage charges. Tuesday’s session was [closed to the media](#).

Gershkovich faces up to 20 years in prison, according to the [Russian criminal code](#), and is the first American journalist to face such accusations by Russia since the end of the Cold War. Gershkovich, The Wall Street Journal, and the U.S. government have all denied the espionage allegations.

“It’s a ruling that ensures Evan will sit in a Russian prison well past one year. It was also Evan’s 12th court appearance, baseless proceedings that falsely portray him as something other than what he is—a journalist who was doing his job,” The Wall Street Journal said in a [statement](#).

The U.S. ambassador to Russia, Lynne Tracy, [called](#) the ruling “particularly painful,” as Friday will mark the journalist’s one-year detention.

“As we cross the one-year mark, the Russian government has yet to present any evidence to substantiate its accusations, no justification for Evan’s continued detention, and no explanation as to why Evan doing his job as a journalist constituted a crime,” Tracy said. On April 11, 2023, the U.S. State Department [designated](#) Gershkovich as “wrongfully detained,” which unlocked a broad government effort to free him.

Russia was the world’s fourth worst jailer of journalists with [at least 22](#), including Gershkovich and [Alsu Kurmasheva](#), a U.S.-Russian journalist, behind bars when CPJ conducted its most recent annual [prison census](#) on December 1, 2023.

After Navalny’s death, the repression is alive and well

By Dr Evgeniya Gidulianova and Willy Fautré

HRWF (14.03.2024) - Despite the increased presence of security forces, there were no mass detentions during the funeral in Moscow on March 1 but the state repression mainly took place after the Western media had left the scene of the ceremony. According to the OVD-Info Human Rights Portal, more than a hundred Russians at least were arrested in 22 cities but they say “*There may be more detainees in each police station than in the published lists. We only publish the names of people we know for sure and whose names we can publish.*” See the lists of OVD-Info [HERE](#)

Over 100 detention cases of mourners

In many regions, the police detained those who came to spontaneous memorials, including those organized at monuments to victims of political repression.

In total, according to OVD-Info, on the day of Alexei Navalny's funeral, security forces made at least 103 detentions in 20 cities across Russia. The largest number took place in Novosibirsk (24), Omsk (15), Yekaterinburg (10), Ramon (9).

On the evening of March 1, a journalist from "Novaya Gazeta" [Vasily Polonsky](#), who was covering the funeral, was briefly arrested in Moscow. He said that the police forced him to show his phone. According to him, an employee of the Center "E" [\[i\]](#) tried to recruit him and proposed him to send the videos to the security forces. *"They are apparently trying to find the Navalny Live camera, because they were interested in who I was streaming for,"* he said.

Arrests in Moscow and other cities: identified by surveillance cameras

In the days following the funeral, security forces continued to detain people who participated in rallies in memory of Alexei Navalny in February and attended his funeral. Those who laid flowers at the monuments of victims of political repression were also accused of administrative violations.

The first [to be detained](#) was a resident of Moscow, who was caught during the funeral on a video in which the police heard the phrase "Glory to the Heroes." (*) She spent the night of March 4 at the police station, after which she was fined 1,500 rubles under an administrative article on the demonstration of prohibited symbols.

On March 5-6, law enforcement agencies detained several more people in the capital.

Polina Orekhova said that the policemen's claims against her were related to the laying of flowers on February 17. She was also prosecuted under the article on violation of the rules for holding rallies (Article 20.2 of the Code of Administrative Offenses). Polina Orekhova [told](#) OVD-Info that the police used force on her in an attempt to force her to give her fingerprints. After that, the security forces came to her home again to intimidate her.

Elena Gribkova, told representatives of the OVD-Info project that the police had questions for her, due to the fact that she came to Navalny's funeral, and before that also participated in the action in memory of the politician on Sakharov Avenue on February 17.

Elena Gribkova was previously [detained](#) on February 17 at the "Wall of Sorrow" in Moscow during the laying of flowers in memory of Alexei Navalny. On that day, the security forces released the girl without a protocol, but on March 5, she was detained again.

On March 6, the Simonovsky Court of Moscow sentenced her to [7 days of arrest](#) under the "rally" article (Part 6.1 of Article 20.2 of the Code of Administrative Offenses). She allegedly "blocked roads" and "interfered with the passage of citizens." Afterwards, the appellate court released her because she needed to take care of a disabled father. In addition, the court took into account that the detainee herself had medical contra-indications to serving the arrest.

Another detainee, **Yegor Komlev**, was arrested outside his house by two plainclothes policemen. He was taken to the police station in the Khoroshevo-Mnevniky district and photographed. His passport was taken away. The young man participated in the laying of flowers on February 16 and 17, and also attended the funeral of Navalny on March 1. The police told Komlev that they had identified him from surveillance cameras in the city. Yegor Komlev [was fined 10 thousand rubles](#), being found guilty under the rally article. This was reported by his defender from OVD-Info Daria Rachilina.

Detentions also took place in other Russian cities. A resident of Ulan-Ude, **Svetlana Vachelanova**, was considered guilty of organizing an unsanctioned public event after she brought a portrait of Alexei Navalny to the monument to the victims of political repression

and laid flowers next to it. The Sovetsky District Court of Ulan-Ude found her guilty under an administrative article on organizing a public event without notice, [Sibir Realii](#) reported. According to the [court decision](#), Vachelanova was guilty of failing to notify the authorities in accordance with the procedure established by law: she "produced campaign material, printing a photo image of A.A. Navalny, known as one of the leaders of the Russian opposition, on A4 format, placed in a frame." Then she "took action to purchase eight flowers." And, finally, she placed a photo and flowers at the foot of the monument to the victims of political repression of the 1930s-1950s.

On March 6, activist **Maria-Victoria Nagornykh**, who had previously served seven days in prison, was detained again [in Murmansk](#). The court sentenced her to another seven days of administrative arrest. In both cases, because of the references to Alexei Navalny. Both times, the court found her guilty of displaying symbols of an extremist organization. The first protocol on Nagornykh was drawn up because of a one-person picket with a poster: "*Alexei Navalny was killed, his blood is on your hands, Vladimir*". Now, she has been charged with posting a photo of Navalny and flowers on a tree. During the first arrest, the activist's health deteriorated greatly. She was kept in dampness conditions and without heating in the temporary detention center, which is located in the basement of Police Department No. 1. Before the trial, an ambulance was sent to her detention place. She was given an anesthetic injection and the doctors said that she needed some treatment with antibiotics.

According to OVD-Info's [calculations](#), after the mourning events that took place on the day of Navalny's death on February 16, more than 15 people were detained after being identified by video cameras.

Final remarks

Dmitry Anisimov, a spokesman for OVD-Info, [said](#) that "it is too early to talk about a trend," but on the day of the funeral, he warned that the persecution of the participants would probably not be limited to detentions directly related to the rally. Anisimov noted that the facial recognition system in Moscow makes it possible to trace everybody everywhere. Since at least 2021, the police have been actively detaining protesters on the basis of data collected by surveillance cameras.

According to Medusa, citing sources in the Kremlin close to the presidential administration, the security forces "can come to the funeral participants [identified by surveillance cameras](#) for prevention," and "those who were active, and not just standing with flowers," are at risk.

(*) "Glory to the Heroes" does not only concern the memory of Navalny as a hero. This is a Ukrainian patriotic phrase that is used as an anti-war slogan. This is a response to the initiating interjection "Slava Ukraini". That is why the Russian Ministry of Justice qualified it as "nazi."

Do not forget Navalny: over 500,000 Russians watched the funeral online

They watched the funeral on YouTube as filmed clandestinely by Navalny's associates and on the Dozhd TV channel.

By Dr Evgeniya Gidulianova and Willy Fautré

HRWF (14.03.2024) - In the afternoon of March 1, over half a million Russians viewed the funeral of Navalny, the leader of the Russian opposition to Vladimir Putin, who was buried in Moscow under intense surveillance. This was two weeks after he died in mysterious circumstances in a colony in Harpa above the Arctic Circle.

About 250,000 people watched the ceremony on YouTube as clandestinely filmed by Navalny's associates. Taking into account the broadcast of the Dozhd TV channel, more than half a million people watched the funeral.

Federal TV channels completely ignored the event. Russian media, operating under conditions of censorship, limited themselves to short news articles.

Farewell to Alexei Navalny on the funeral day and afterwards

Farewell to Navalny took place in a church in Moscow's residential area of Maryino, and the funeral itself took place at the nearby Borisov cemetery. Thousands of people came to say goodbye to him, despite the warnings and threats of the authorities. The funeral was also attended by U.S. Ambassador Lynne Tracy, German Ambassador Alexander Graf Lambsdorff, and French Ambassador Pierre Levy.

Those wishing to say goodbye to Navalny came to the church despite the unequivocal warnings of the authorities. Vladimir Putin's press secretary Dmitry Peskov said that *"there is a law that must be obeyed" and "any unsanctioned gatherings will be held in violation of the law, so those who participate in them will be held accountable."*

In the evening before the funeral, metal barriers began to be brought to the nearest metro station, which subsequently cordoned off the territory near the church. Reinforced police patrols were posted at the Barysau cemetery, and CCTV cameras were hung on lamp posts. In Moscow universities, they were threatened with expulsion for participating in the farewell to Navalny.

The authorities severely restricted communications in Maryino. A so-called ["shutdown"](#) was recorded by IT specialist Mikhail Klimarev. According to him, the authorities transferred the work of communication towers in the area of the funeral to an "outdated standard": *"It seems to work (probably), but has a much lower capacity for simultaneous connections. As a result, you get the effect of network congestion and the Internet does not work,"* he said. The consequence was that broadcasts from the scene worked with long interruptions. Still, photos and videos from the scene appeared in the media and social networks. It was clear from them that by two o'clock in the afternoon, thousands of people had gathered at the church, despite the threats of the authorities.

People staged a presidential-level funeral for Navalny, according to [SVOBODA](#). *The number of people who came to say goodbye was unprecedented and did not dry up for many days after the funeral. According to calculations* of Meduza project, there were at least 16.5 thousand of them. People continued to go to the Barysau cemetery after the funeral. Both on [Saturday](#) and [Sunday](#) the queue to Navalny's grave stretched for hundreds of meters. The queue moved quickly, the guards on duty at the grave gave people flowers and asked them to go on so as not to retain others. On Sunday afternoon, the wooden cross on the grave (usually about 1.7 meters high) was completely [covered with flowers](#).

Resolution of the European Parliament

The European Parliament adopted [the Resolution](#) "On the murder of Alexei Navalny and the need for EU action in support of political prisoners and suppressed civil society in Russia".

On February 29, in Strasbourg, 506 deputies voted for it, 9 voted against, 32 abstained.

The European Parliament strongly condemned the murder of Alexei Navalny and fully supported Yulia Navalnaya in her determination to continue his work. In the adopted resolution, they stress that full criminal and political responsibility for his death lies with the Russian state, and its President Vladimir Putin in particular, who must be held accountable.

The MPs said that the murder of Alexei Navalny is another sign of the growing and systematic repression in Russia and demanded an independent and transparent international investigation into his murder in order to uncover the truth, ensure accountability and ensure justice.

Russia's political system is controlled, the resolution said, by a consolidated authoritarian regime with rampant corruption, which uses rigged elections as a semblance of democracy and concentrates all power in the hands of Vladimir Putin.

Human rights defender Oleg Orlov (70) jailed

By Aaron Rhodes

[Foref Europe](#) (06.03.2024) - On February 27, 2024, a Russian court sentenced human rights defender Oleg Orlov to a two-and-a-half year prison term, convicting him of "discrediting" the Russian army due to his portrayal of the Russian regime as "totalitarian and fascist."

In a statement prior to his sentencing, Orlov defended the veracity of his words, showing that the Russian government not only dictates social, political, and economic life but has also tightened its grip on culture, scientific thought, and even private lives. He illustrated this with examples of Russian citizens facing persecution for expressing their beliefs, and noting that President Putin had claimed that Poland "forced Hitler to start World War II."

According to Orlov, individuals are being punished for exercising "any independent judgment," while political prisoners are losing their lives simply for envisioning a democratic, prosperous Russia that poses no threat to the outside world.

In a concluding echo of the late dissident leader Alexei Navalny's words, Orlov urged, "Don't lose heart, and do not lose optimism. Truth is on our side."

Ironically, the court's decision serves as an inadvertent validation of Orlov's claims, and was thus self-contradictory. Indeed, it demonstrates Russia's descent into a fascist state. In doing so, it also exposes the sheer absurdity of claims that Russia's war against Ukraine is justified as one to eradicate fascism—a falsehood repeated to the Russian people in daily media propaganda. Accusing others of one's own malevolence remains a hallmark of fascist propaganda.

During my tenure as the executive director of the International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights (IHF), I had the privilege of cooperating with Orlov and the Memorial human rights organization. Orlov's personality and moral character exemplify the noble aspects of

Russia's human rights dissident tradition: principled, selfless, scrupulously nonpartisan, committed to intellectual integrity, and fearless.

Despite the bleak situation in Russia, along with many other post-Soviet republics and societies globally, we owe it to Orlov and his colleagues not to give up; to keep insisting on the rights of all to basic political freedoms.

Aaron Anthony Rhodes is a renowned international human rights defender and former Executive Director of the International Helsinki Federation from 1993 to 2007. Rhodes made an invaluable contribution to the development of the Helsinki movement in Russia and other post-Soviet countries. A separate area of his work was numerous investigations on human rights in the Middle East, Cuba, Japan, Korea, Pakistan, Malaysia, Hong Kong and other countries.

In 2018, Rhodes published *The Debasement of Human Rights: How Politics Sabotage the Ideal of Freedom* (Encounter Books, New York). His articles have appeared in the *Wall Street Journal*, *Newsweek*, *Die Zeit*, *The American Interest*, *National Review Online*, and elsewhere.

Rhodes, who lives in Hamburg, Germany, was named President of FOREF Europe in 2014. FOREF monitors religious freedom and other human rights issues worldwide, working with civil society, governments, and international institutions.

HRWF Note

In 2022, Oleg Orlov was chairing a plenary session of the annual OSCE Human Dimension implementation Meeting in Warsaw. I interviewed him and he became a regular reader of our daily newsletters (Willy Fautré)

RELATED ARTICLES

1. 'Our Country Is Sinking Into Darkness': Oleg Orlov's Final Word in Court ([The Moscow Times](#)).
Orlov was sentenced to 2.5 years in prison on Tuesday for his opposition to the war in Ukraine. The Moscow Times has translated and republished his final statement in court given ahead of the verdict.
2. Russia Imprisoned My Friend Oleg Orlov For Telling It Like It Is ([Moscow Times](#))
3. Russian human rights campaigner sentenced to jail for denouncing war([The Guardian](#))
4. Russian Court Liquidates Historical Research And Human Rights Group "Memorial" ([FOREF Europe](#))

EU sanctions against the head of Belarus' Red Cross

Human Rights Without Frontiers had denounced him in its [Written Statement addressed to the 54th Session of the UN Human Rights Council \(11 September – 13 October 2023\)](#) and also in various reports about the forcible transfer of Ukrainian children by and to Russia.

By Willy Fautré

HRWF (19.02.2024) - Dzmitry Shautsou, the head of the Red Cross in Belarus has been added to the 13th package of EU sanctions against Russia for contributing to Russia's forcible transfer of Ukrainian children from the occupied territories. Lukashenko's regime is accused of taking more than 2,400 Ukrainian children to 13 facilities in Belarus, according to a study by Yale University.

Three other Belarusians were also blacklisted for child deportations: Dmitriy Demidov, Aleksey Talai, and Olga Volkova.

Dmitriy Demidov, a municipal chief in the Vitebsk region of Belarus, was one of the 'key persons involved in the forcible deportation of Ukrainian children to Belarus and their subsequent illegal adoption by Russian and Belarusian families.'

Who is Dzmitry Shautsou?

Dzmitry Yaŭhienavič Shautsou (Belarusian: Дзмітрый Яўгенавіч Шаўцоў). He is a Belarusian physician and politician. He started to serve as head of the Belarus Red Cross on 10 June 2021. He previously served as a deputy of the House of Representatives from 2012 to 2019. Shautsou has raised controversy as head of the Belarus Red Cross for [referring to homosexuality as 'perversion' and 'psychological retardation'](#) and for approving the forcible transfer of thousands of Ukrainian children from the occupied territories by Russia.

As general director of the Belarus Red Cross, he visited 'children from Ukraine in both Belarus and Russia-occupied Ukraine, wearing pro-Russia military apparel.

During the controversial 2019 Belarusian parliamentary election, Shautsou was the head of the Minsk Electoral Commission. After protests broke out, he defended the results, accusing protesters of being "provocateurs.

In June 2022, he visited Mariupol during the Russian siege of the city, wearing a military uniform bearing the Z symbol used by Russian pro-war authorities. On 21 July 2023, he triggered further controversy by expressing his support for the deployment of nuclear Weapons to Belarus.

The Belarus Red Cross (BRC) was suspended from the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) on 1 December 2023 after it refused to fire Shautsou. One can wonder why the IFRC took so much time to clean up its institution.

In early October 2023, he was included in the [sanctions list of the Baltic States](#).

On December 5, 2023, the [US Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control](#) added Shautsou to its Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons List.

More reading about Dzmitry Shautsou

<https://nashaniva.com/ru/321590>

<https://euroradio.fm/ru/kto-takoy-dmitriy-shevcov-skandalnyy-glava-krasnogo-kresta-v-belarusi>

<https://ecom.ngo/news-ecom/gomofobiya-v-belaruskom-krasnom-kreste>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y8KnyYaHPbY>