



[Перейти](#)

27.04.2023

## Wartime Repressions Report. April 2023

---

### Русская версия

---

Fourteen months ago Russia launched its full-scale war against Ukraine. It also marked the start of a new wave of repressions against people inside Russia. Almost 20 thousand people have so far been arrested for their antiwar position and more than 500 people, including minors and pensioners, have been charged with criminal cases.

OVD-Info continues to collect and analyze data about political and antiwar repressions in Russia. You can support the project [here](#).

## RESTRICTIONS ON THE RIGHT OF ASSEMBLY

# 19,673

**detentions for anti-war stance  
between 24 March 2022 and 21 April 2023**

Violence during detentions is not rare. For instance, a conscript named Timur Dzhurayev, who refused to sign the receipt of a military draft notice, was **beaten** by law enforcement during his arrest. We also know of other 565 cases of the detentions of minors.

In the period from February 2022 to January 2023, police officers used violence against protesters at rallies 413 times.

## **REPRESSIONS ON THE LEGISLATIVE LEVEL**

# 5

**new repressive bills introduced  
between 24 March 2022 and 21 April 2023**

Lawmakers have managed to adopt two out of five new repressive bills this month, while **one** of them passed as quickly as within two days.

Such an expeditious adoption of bills is possible due to the practice of introducing amendments directly in the second reading. For example, lawmakers introduced the amendments on life imprisonment for treason and an increase in prison time for terrorism, as well as a new Article 284.3 of the Criminal Code as early as November of last year. Initially, only a minor amendment was supposed to be adopted that would expand Article 281 of the Criminal

Code («Diversion»). The same logic was applied when adopting the **law** on electronic draft notices and a host of other restrictions for conscripts and those who are mobilized — the corresponding amendments were introduced directly in the second reading into a bill that had been submitted to the State Duma as far back as 2018 and that then made it through the entire law making procedure in four days.

Other bills substantially simplify the legislation on conducting **referendums** which, if adopted, will at any time allow conducting a poll on the extension of the presidential term in office with much less stringent procedural requirements, as well as **provide** for dropping criminal charges for low and medium severity offenses if the individual decides to volunteer for the war.

In addition, another **bill** has been introduced that expands the powers of temporary youth detention centers to identify individuals involved in crimes and socially dangerous actions (such actions may also include rallies, antiwar flyers, and other actions considered undesirable by the authorities). On top of that, minors who have «within one year committed offenses at least twice that carry administrative responsibility and include a violation of public order and security» may start being placed in these centers.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Закон	Ссылка
1	О внесении изменений в Федеральный закон "Об образовании в Российск...	<a href="https://">https://</a>
2	О внесении изменений в Кодекс Российской Федерации об администрати...	<a href="https://">https://</a>
3	О внесении изменения в статью 205-6 Уголовного кодекса Российской Фе...	<a href="https://">https://</a>
4	On Amendments to Article 6.21 of the Code of the Russian Federation on Admi...	<a href="https://">https://</a>
5	On Amendments to Article 458 of the Criminal Procedure Code of the Russian ...	<a href="https://">https://</a>
6	On Amendments to the Federal Law "On Communications" and Certain Legisla...	<a href="https://">https://</a>
7	On Amendments to the Federal Law "On Combating the Legalization (Launderi...	<a href="https://">https://</a>
68 records		

 [Download CSV](#) [View larger version](#)

Besides the new bills, lawmakers have also adopted two ones introduced earlier—on the expansion of administrative responsibility for an “unauthorized penetration” to the territory of military recruiting offices and other administrative buildings (for instance, this may apply to attorneys or relatives of those mobilized). The law on citizenship was also amended and now it provides for the stripping of citizenship for committing a range of offenses. The list includes offenses set forth in Articles 280.3, 207.3, 212.1, and a series of other repressive articles of the Criminal Code.

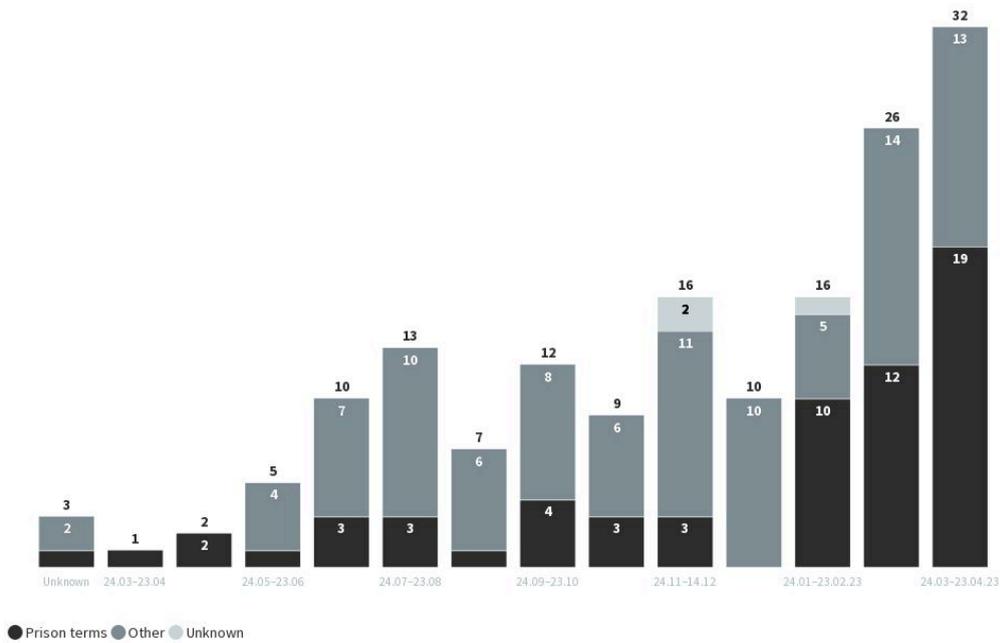
Overall, since the beginning of the war, lawmakers have introduced at least **38** repressive bills, **33** of which have already passed at least the first reading.

## CRIMINAL CASES

# 537

defendants in an “Anti-war case”  
As of 24 April 2023

## The number of sentences for defendants in the anti-war case by month

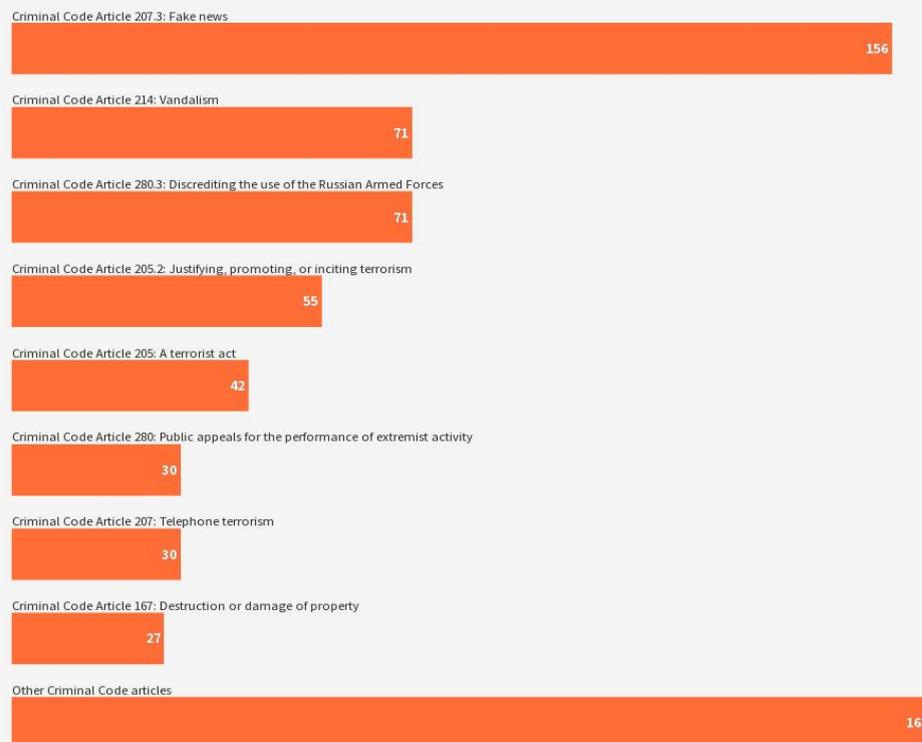


Data: OVD-Info • 23 April 2023

To the real terms we refer: deprivation of liberty in a colony-settlement; imprisonment in a colony of general regime (including in absentia); imprisonment in a strict regime colony; forced treatment. This also includes sentencing to an actual imprisonment, which we were told about without details about the colony. Other types of punishment include: a fine; restriction of freedom; conditional imprisonment; forced labor; correctional labor, including probation; compulsory work.

Made with Flourish • Create your own

## The number of defendants in the “anti-war case” prosecuted under each of the articles



Data: OVD-Info • 22 April 2023

Defendants being prosecuted under several articles are included in each of the corresponding columns

This month, Nikolay Gutsenovich has been said to have been charged for 18 comments under antiwar posts in Odnoklassniki. Also, this month has seen court sentences against at least 32 antiwar defendants, out of whom more than a half (19) have received actual prison times. The shortest actual prison time is two years while the longest is 25 years.

Defendants in criminal cases are subjected to violence, torture, and other types of pressure from law enforcement. For instance, this month it has turned out that in September law enforcement **tortured** Oleg Vazhdayev, the defendant in a case of setting fire to a military recruiting office, with electric shocks. Kirill Butylin, sentenced to 13 years in prison for an attempt to set fire to a military recruiting office, **spoke** about threats for refusing to say «Putin is great.» Artyom Begoyan, who is charged for setting fire to a railroad switch in Chuvashia, was **forced** to refuse the services of an attorney under threats of being forcibly taken to a forest. The authorities **refuse** to investigate such instances of torture and violence.

# 32

**defendants in the “anti-war case” subjected to torture and/or violence (at least)**

Among those prosecuted who are held in custody and who get sentenced to actual prison times are also people with health issues. For example, a 62-year-old Yeveniy Bestuzhev, who has serious health issues, continues to be **held** in pre-trial detention. He has already suffered several heart attacks in custody. Vladimir Kara-Murza has been sentenced to 25 years in prison, but while still in pre-trial detention,

he began to suffer from numbness in his limbs and was diagnosed with [polyneuropathy](#), which is on the [list](#) of diseases that exclude serving prison time. Oleg Belousov has been [sentenced](#) to 5.5 years in prison; the prosecution had asked for 9.5 years, but the court «took into account» the fact that Oleg has Class III disability and a disabled son who the prosecution forbade him to contact.

Overall, at least 25 defendants in the «antiwar» case have health issues. At least 12 of them are now in custody. Among them is also Sasha Skochilenko, whose life is right now in danger, [according to](#) a cardiologist who has examined her in pre-trial detention.

The number of cases under articles related to national security (treason, espionage, clandestine collaboration with a foreign state) has recently risen significantly. The «Pervy otdel» human rights project [cites](#) the following statistics: in the first 3.5 months of 2023, at least 21 new cases are reported to have been initiated, while 25 such cases were opened throughout the entire year of 2022.

In the past month, treason charges have been [brought](#) against Ilya Baburin —for a failed attempt to set fire to a military recruiting office. Besides, at least four other new treason cases have emerged — in [Sakhalin](#), [Rostov-on-Don](#), [Tver](#), and [Khabarovsk](#) (this is at least the third known treason case initiated for money transfers to Ukraine). At least two new espionage cases have been opened as well — in [Moscow](#) and [Nizhny Tagil](#). Practically all of these cases are related to the war in Ukraine.

Over the past month, OVD-Info attorneys have helped 60 defendants in 50 antiwar criminal cases in 30 cities, and also provided help during six house searches. [Support the project.](#)

## **ADMINISTRATIVE CASES**

# 6,561

**cases under article 20.3.3. ("Discreditation")  
since the beginning of the full-scale war**

A young teacher from the Krasnoyarsk region was **fined** for group chatting with his students about Crimea and the Donbass. The chat group has 17 participants, and the teacher himself does not know how law enforcement learned about the messages. An assistant prosecutor stated at a court hearing that the teacher's actions were of public nature, "because an indefinite circle of people has access to the phones of the students participating in the chat." Meanwhile, a man has been **arrested** in Sochi for forwarding the text of an FBK investigation about Vladimir Putin via WhatsApp and has had a protocol drawn up against him under the article on "discrediting the military." A woman from the Altai region has been **fined** 30 thousand rubles for sending a voice message in WhatsApp.

**Number of cases initiated under Article  
20.3.3 in Russia's regions and in the territory  
of the annexed Republic of Crimea**



Besides, in this month pro-Kremlin activists have also been prosecuted for discrediting the Russian armed forces. For instance, Yuriy Yevich, a “military doctor” who had earlier participated in torturing Ukrainians, had a protocol **drawn up** against him for discrediting the military for giving a public lecture to medical students. A court later refused to accept the case and returned it to the police. A protocol was also **drawn up** against Igor Grinev, a Krasnoyarsk regional deputy from the Communist party, who had condemned the ceding of control over Kherson.

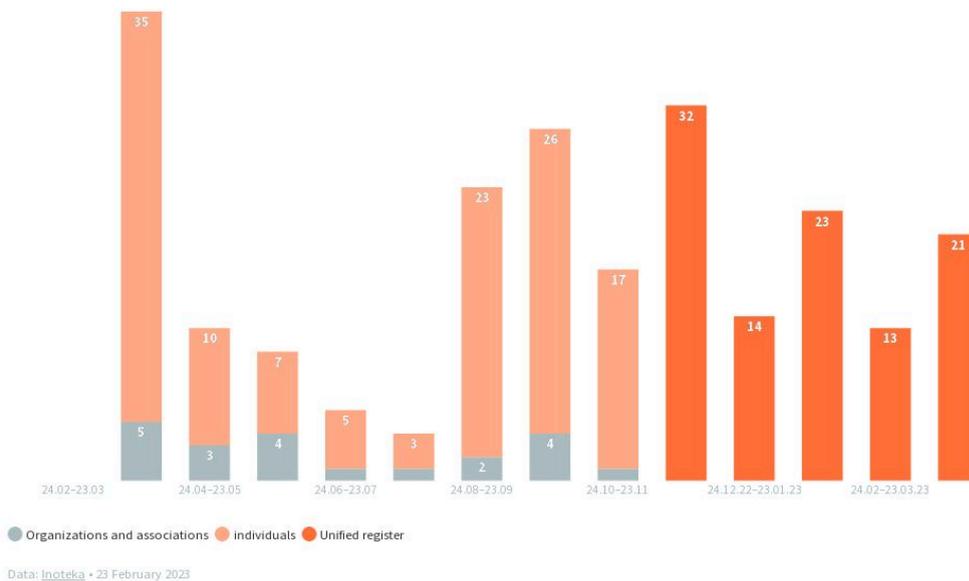
Over the past month, OVD-Info attorneys have participated in 110 administrative cases in courts and have helped six arrested individuals. For example, an attorney cooperating with us has **helped a picketer** in Samara who protested with a poster saying “Hug me if [you are] against the war”. **Support the project.**

## **“FOREIGN AGENTS” AND “UNDESIRABLE ORGANIZATIONS”**

## “foreign agents” added to the register by the Ministry of Justice between 24.02.23 and 23.03.23

A «strange agent» is how a coordinator of Ryazan’s branch of Golos Sofia Ivanova **called herself** in her foreign agent label. Roskomnadzor has viewed that as an absence of foreign agent labeling and has drawn up a protocol against her for violating the «foreign agent» law.

250 individuals, organizations and associations were recognized as “foreign agents” in 14 months



Made with Flourish • Create your own

On March 28, a court in Yoshkar-Ola **fined** the «Man and Law» human rights organization 150 thousand rubles for a repost. This shows that «foreign agents» are in fact forbidden from making reposts in Telegram channels because the messenger does not allow adding the corresponding foreign agent labeling when making a repost; that is possible only when posting a new separate message.

Again, after receiving two fines for an administrative violation of the «foreign agent» law, any subsequent violation of the

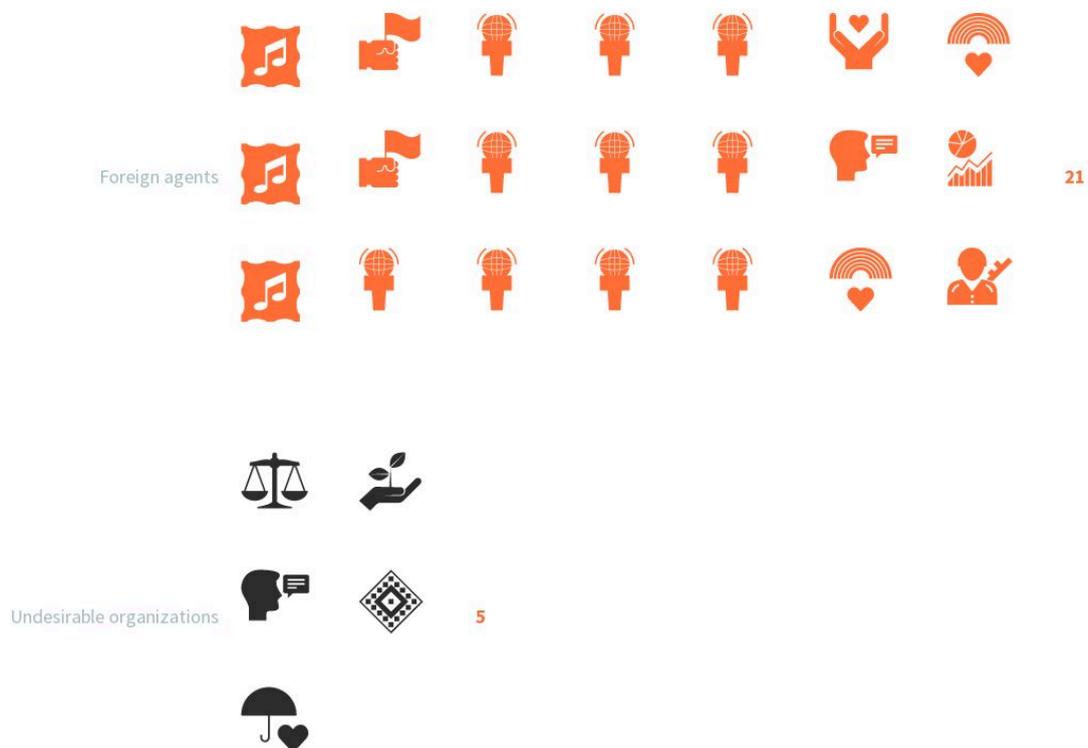
law may lead to bringing criminal charges. Overall, at least six cases of such fines have been handed to courts over the past month.

# 5

## organizations declared “undesirable” from between 24 March 2022 and 21 April 2023

This month, the “undesired” status has been assigned to a Japanese organization “Union of the Locals of the Islands of Tisima and Khabomai”, the “Free University,” the “Russia — EU Civil Society Forum,” the “Bellona” environmental fund, and the “KrymSOS” human rights project.

New foreign agents and undesirable organizations this month



## EXTRAJUDICIAL PRESSURE

The father of 16-year-old Yegor Balazeikin was **laid off** from his job for a criminal case initiated against his son. Yegor is the defendant in an antiwar case, is chronically ill, but is nevertheless being held in pre-trial detention on the suspicion of setting fire to two military recruiting offices. This month, we have learned about eight other people prosecuted at their work for their antiwar position — they get laid off, are forced to leave on their own, or their job contracts do not get extended.

In the annexed Crimea, Russian law enforcement forces people who have expressed antiwar views to apologize on camera. At least seven such videos have been published on the Internet over the past month.

People get prosecuted for their antiwar views not only within Russia, but also beyond. For instance, Vietnam **deports** Russian citizens who have expressed antiwar views.

# 14

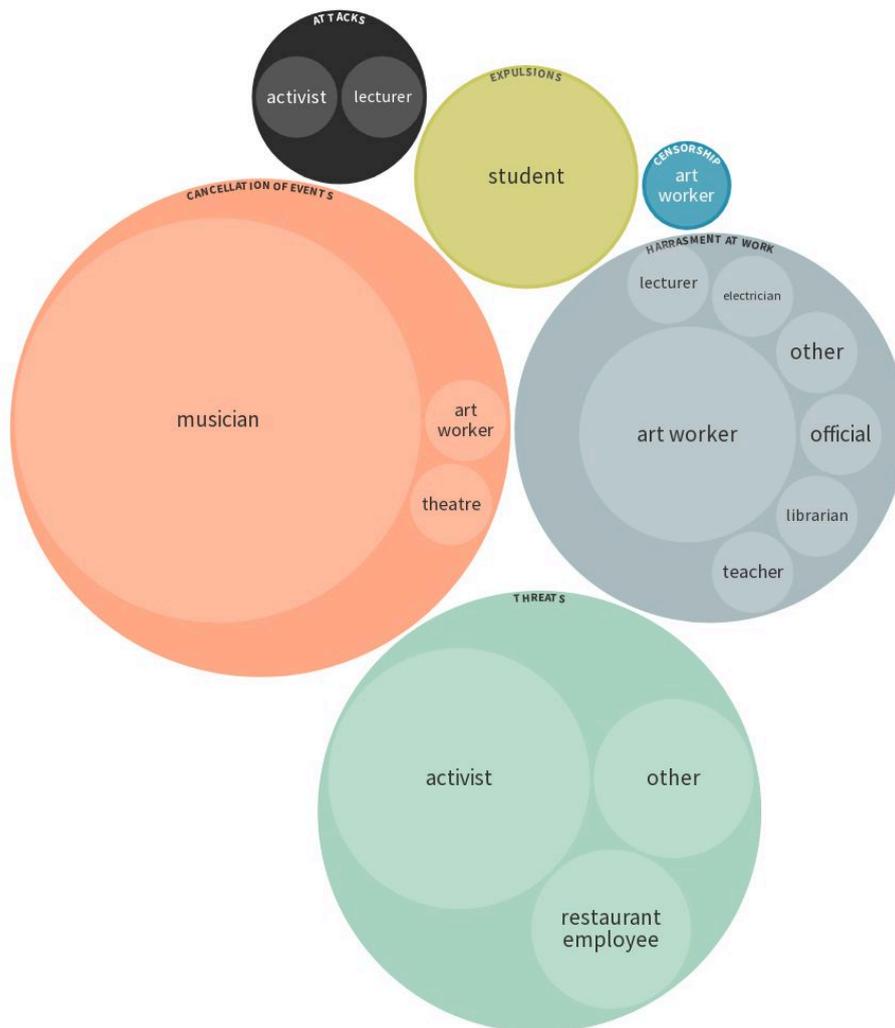
**artists (at least) faced cancellation of their events this month due to anti-war stance**

The musical band “Night Snipers” is said to have had its **concerts canceled** in six cities at once, while the Naive band **in three**. Other creative artists also face challenges. For instance, four students of the Yaroslav State Theater Institute were **forced** to withdraw from the university for their refusal to perform at a pro-war event.

In Ulan-Ude, actor Artur Shuvalov **cut** his veins open after the

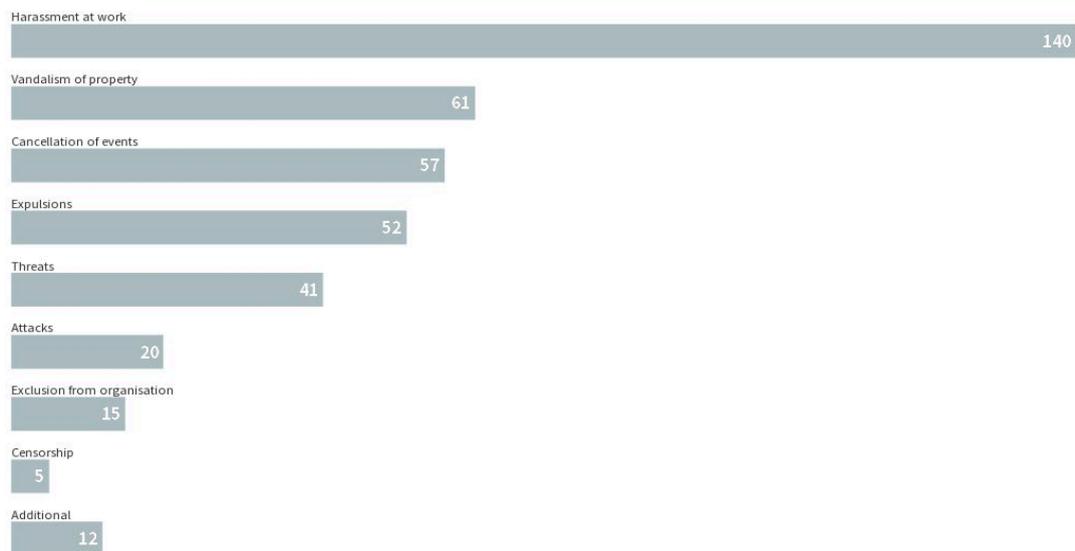
end of a performance and accused the management of the theater of coercion. He had earlier refused to perform before Russia's troops and torn down a flag with the letter Z, and before the performance he learned that his wife had been fired from the same theater. In March 2022, the chief artist was **laid off** from the same theater for antiwar views. The incident with Shuvalov has led to the **resignation** of the theater's director.

Extra-judicial pressure in April



Data: [Общественное](#) • As of 22 April 2023

## Extrajudicial pressure on people with an anti-war position



As of 21 April 2023

Made with Flourish • Create your own

## BLOCKING AND CENSORSHIP

# 784

resources blocked by the "Roskomnadzor"  
between 24 March 2022 and 21 April 2023

Roskomnadzor has **reported** having blocked almost 3.5 thousand mirror links to media declared «foreign agents.» Roskomnadzor's staff claim to be able to block «mirrors» within three hours from their setup. The authorities also block media access to which is restricted as part of wartime censorship.

For their part, Vkontakte and Odnoklassniki have **blocked** a video showing mobilized Siberians who were taken prisoners of war by the Ukrainians.

# PRESSURING INDEPENDENT MEDIA

## 37

### journalists are defendants in the criminal “Anti-war Case”

Journalist Ela Znamenskaya was **fined** for a stream titled «Your denunciation is important to us.» She was found guilty under the article on discrediting the military for using phrases «they will come back with a sense of total impunity, ” „they are sending what they stole, ” „due to someone’s ambitions—hundreds of deaths—we are trying to denazify something over there, ” and „what worries me is that official Russian sources are a fake.“

The authorities are attempting to have the editor of the independent newspaper Vzyatka (A Bribe) Eduard Mochalov **reimburse** them for a forensic examination of his statements for which he had a protocol drawn up against him for discrediting the military (part 1 of Article 20.3.3 of the Code of Administrative Offenses).

In Buryatia, police officers have **arrested** journalist Ayuna Shagdurova who is writing an article about how the village of Khurtaga lives without a vet—the only one there was mobilized and died. She got denounced.

Journalists continue to be criminally prosecuted for publications and materials related to the war in Ukraine. In this month alone, the authorities have **brought** three criminal charges at once against a RusNews journalist Roman Ivanov related to «fakes» for his posts in his Telegram channel. Evan Gershkovich, a journalist writing for The Wall Street, has been **charged** with espionage (Article 276 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation). Evan was writing an article about attitudes to the war and the recruitment

of people in the Urals to PMC Vagner. A DOXA journalist Maria Menshikova was criminally **charged** for calls to commit acts of terrorism for her post where she suggested writing letters to support people arrested for setting fire to military recruiting offices.

## **PRESSURING THE CIVIL SOCIETY**

# **4**

**lawyers of defendants in anti-war cases were persecuted between 24 March 2023 and 21 April 2023**

Several attorneys defending the defendants of the antiwar case have been subjected to various kinds of prosecution. For example, before a regular court hearing in the antiwar case against Olga Smirnova, a security guard **injured** the arm of her attorney Maria Zyryanova. Two disciplinary proceedings have been **initiated** against Yuriy Novolodskiy, defense attorney of artist Sasha Skochilenko, after the vice president of the Saint-Petersburg bar association denounced him, and Yuriy may now lose his status of an attorney. In the Krasnodar region, a court has **fined** attorney Olesya Panyuzheva who defends Alexander Nozdrinov, the defendant in a case for «fakes» about the Russian military. Vladimir Kara-Murza's attorney Vadim Prokhorov **left** Russia several days before the court announced the verdict; he was being threatened with a criminal case.

## **LINKS TO OTHER OVD-INFO DATA AND REPORTS**

- Summary of anti-war repressions. [March 2023](#), [February 2023](#), [January 2023](#), [December 2022](#), [October 2022](#), [September 2022](#), [August 2022](#), [July 2022](#), [June 2022](#)
- Report in Russian «[No war. How the Russian authorities are fighting anti-war protests.](#)»
- Report in Ukrainian «[No war. How the Russian authorities are fighting anti-war protests.](#)»
- Guide «[The anti-war case.](#)»
- The input of information in reply to the call for submissions: [Challenges to freedom of opinion and expression in times of conflicts and disturbances.](#)
- [The Report on Civil Rights and Freedoms of Children](#)
- Report «[Blocking Internet resources as a tool of political censorship.](#)»
- Project on the law on «foreign agents» — «[Inoteka](#)».
- Report «[How the authorities use cameras and facial recognition against protesters.](#)»
- [Reports](#) of OVD-Info and other organizations on the compliance of the Russian Federation with its international obligations in the field of human rights.
- [Information on the human rights situation in Russia](#) for the OSCE Moscow Mechanism.

## Ещё почитать

28.05.2025 [Вся Россия](#)

На 167 преподавателей и студентов завели политически мотивированные уголовные дела

с начала войны

---



**«Хочу мира». Волгоградского юриста, выступавшего против войны, отправили в колонию на шесть лет из-за одного поста**

История Руслана Нурушева, который с 2014 года протестует против агрессии в отношении Украины

---



## **Что такое «оправдание терроризма» и как за него преследуют?**

В рейтинге уголовных статей, по которым россиян преследуют за высказывания, первую строчку уже второй год статья о публичных призывах, оправдании или пропаганде терроризма...



### **Требуем запретить «карусельные» аресты**

В октябре 2025 года суд в Петербурге отправил под административный арест участников группы «Стоптайм»: вокалистку Диану Логинову (Наоко), барабанщика Владислава Леонтьева и гитариста...



**Задержания, суды и давление за антивоенные высказывания и критику войны в Украине**

4473 новостей и текстов по теме