

Artem Belsky in a solitary protest with a poster «Wishing for peace is not a crime! I am against the war» by the Kazan Cathedral in the center of St. Petersburg, September 30, 2023 / Photo provided by eyewitnesses

27.10.2023

Persecution of the anti-war movement report: October 2023

[Русская версия](#)

Twenty months ago, Russia launched a full-scale war against Ukraine. Immediately after the anti-war protests of the first days of the invasion, an unprecedented wave of repressions began within Russia.

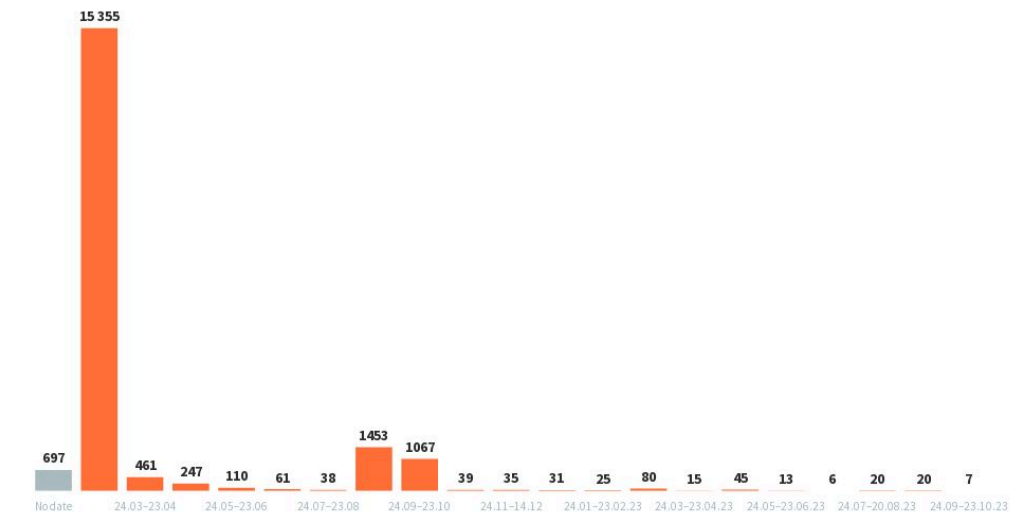
OVD-Info continues to collect and analyze data on persecution for anti-war stance in Russia and on the territory of the annexed Republic of Crimea.

RESTRICTIONS ON THE RIGHT TO FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

19 834

detentions for anti-war stance
between 24 February 2022 and 22 October 2023

Number of Detentions for Anti-War Stance by Month



Data [DVD-Info](#) • We provide the number of arrests for anti-war stance by month in Russia and on the territory of the annexed Republic of Crimea and Sevastopol Update and recalculation of all data as of 23.10.2023

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Arrests for expressing anti-war views in public persist across various regions of Russia. In Moscow, the law enforcement detained and **drew up** a protocol on a 24-year-old transportation security employee Vladislav G. from Dedovsk, a town in the Moscow region, for speaking on the phone in the Ukrainian language. In Barnaul, Altay region, security forces **detained** Artem Saharov, who was reciting his anti-war and opposition poetry near the Pushkin monument. In St. Petersburg, police **detained** Artem Belsky, who stood near the Kazan Cathedral holding a sign reading, «Wishing for peace is not a crime! I am against war.»



REPRESSIONS AT THE LEGISLATIVE LEVEL



The State Duma has approved two bills in their initial readings. The first bill **broadens** the criminal article relating to public calls for extremism (Article 280 of the Criminal Code) by introducing liability for «publicly propagating and justifying extremism». The second bill **introduces** criminal liability for statements about Russian National Guard officers fighting in Ukraine. Additionally, a law allowing the blocking of resources publishing information about financing the Armed Forces of Ukraine and instructions for transferring money to Ukrainian organizations and funds was **passed** in its third and final reading.

This month, lawmakers also **proposed** a ban for individuals who have «collaborated» with «undesirable» organizations on working in NGOs. Furthermore, they introduced a **bill** to establish criminal liability for the unlawful conduct of investigative actions by officials of foreign states and international organizations in which the Russian Federation is not involved (such as investigations by the International Criminal Court).

Deputies of the State Council of Tatarstan have **sent** a legislative initiative to the State Duma suggesting remote fines for Russian citizens residing abroad for discrediting the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation or calling for violation of the country's territorial integrity. The project has not yet appeared on the State Duma's website.

CRIMINAL CASES

748

**defendants in criminal lawsuits against anti-war activity
since 24 February 2022**

This month, we learned about 38 new individuals who have become suspects in «anti-war» criminal cases. Among them

are the creators of the animated series »[Masyanya](#)» and »[Mr. Freeman](#), » as well as several residents of the Samara region in the Middle Volga Region of Russia accused of rehabilitating Nazism due to the desecration of the monument to «Special war operation participants».

A new criminal case was [initiated](#) against municipal deputy Alexey Gorinov, who is currently in a penal colony in Vladimir, a city in central Russia. According to the investigation, Gorinov, who had been convicted in a «fake news» case, «personally made statements justifying terrorist activities» in the presence of other inmates of the colony.

Security forces conducted a search at the St. Pokrovsky (Intercession) -Tikhon's Church of the Russian Orthodox Church in Slavyansk-na-Kubani, a city in South Russia, and assaulted Archimandrite Iona, the assistant to the archbishop. During the interrogation, Father Iona was verbally accused of discrediting the army because of an article titled «Cult of War» on the church's [website](#). Archbishop Victor was also targeted due to a video about the church on the «Novaya Gazeta Europa» YouTube channel, where journalists discussed his anti-war position. Security forces warned Father Victor that if he continued to «discredit» the army, a criminal case would be initiated against him.

Number of Defendants in “Anti-War” Cases Prosecuted Under Each of the Articles

Defendants prosecuted under several articles are added to a column of each article



Data [OVD-Info](#) • As of 22.10.2023

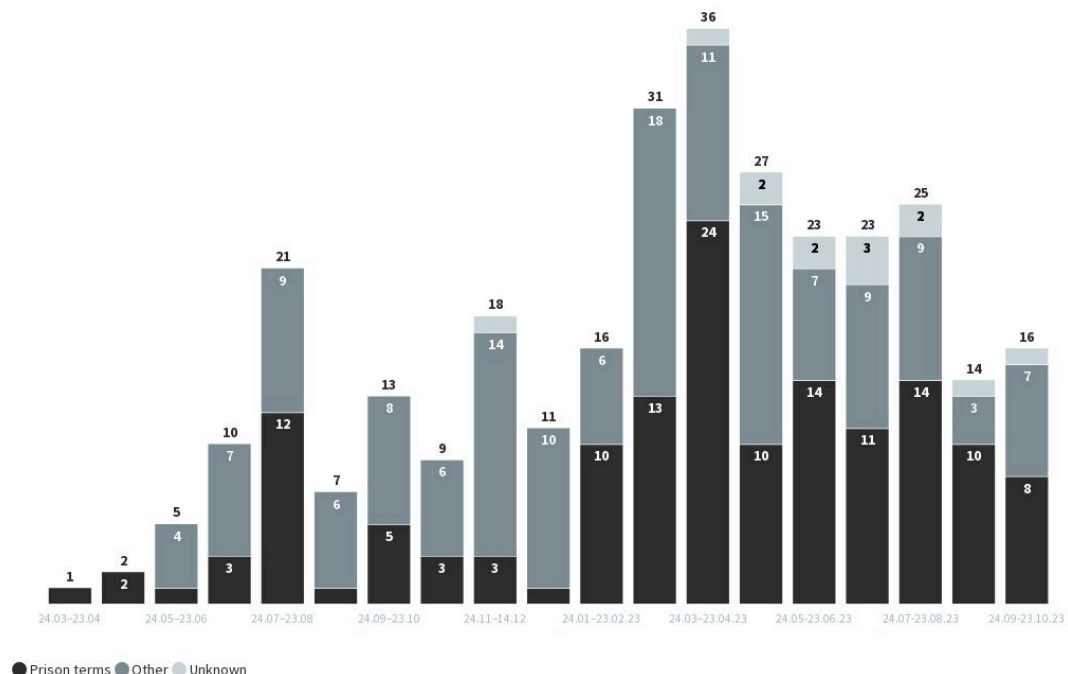
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Every month, we become aware of new cases of torture, violence, and pressure against suspects in criminal cases. Among the cases that became known this month:

In Novosibirsk, a large city in Siberia, Ilya Baburin, accused of terrorism and an attempt to commit state treason due to an attempted arson at the military enlistment office, was **beaten** by the guards. The young man stated that, while inside of the service vehicle, security officers pushed him to the floor, dragged him across the floor, and physically assaulted him. They beat him, including striking him in the eyes, and even jumped on him while calling him a «traitor to the homeland.» One of the guards told Baburin that it «would get even tougher».

Artist Sasha Skochilenko, accused of spreading «fake news» about the military, is subjected to torture by **hunger** on the days of court hearings. Yan Ksenzhepolsky, a defendant in the «Spring» case, has **not received** any food or clothing parcels for weeks in detention. Valeria Zotova, convicted of attempting a terrorist act, **reported** pressure while in detention in Yaroslavl, a city in Central Russia. She is not receiving her letters, and she has been threatened. Anti-war activist Andrei Trofimov, who is facing charges on three counts, **went** on a hunger strike in a pre-trial detention center in Tver, a city in Central European Russia. He demands censorship of incoming and outgoing correspondence to be conveyed strictly following the Internal Regulations and requests the delivery of all letters that have been withheld by censorship since July, for reasons not specified in the regulations. On October 17, Trofimov was **sentenced** to 10 years of imprisonment.

Number of sentences for defendants in the anti-war case by month



Data OVD-Info • As of 23.08.2023
We consider real prison terms to be: imprisonment in a colony-settlement; imprisonment in a general regime colony (including in absentia); imprisonment in a maximum security colony; compulsory treatment. Other types of punishment include: fine; restriction of freedom; suspended imprisonment; forced labor; correctional labor, including probation; compulsory work.

Among the people, who were sentenced this month is blogger Sanya Novokubansk, **sentenced** to eight and a half years of imprisonment under the article about «fakes» and the former employee of Hockey Club *Torpedo* Mikhail Zharikov, **sentenced** to 6 years in prison under three articles — they received such terms because of posts on social networks. Severe sentences were passed for arson of military recruiting offices — for example, **Mikhail Filatov** from Uryupinsk, small town in the South-East of European Russia, was sentenced to 12 years in prison, **Mikhail Babintsev** from Buryatia, region in the Far-East of Russia — to 13 years.

The investigation against anti-war protest among military personnel is also under way, for example, Eugeni Parasochka and Viktor Shkvarok were **sentenced** to 2.5 years in a penal colony because of their unwillingness to fight in Ukraine. Another military man was **sentenced** because of «fakes» about the army.

Even outside of Russia anti-war activists are not safe. Thus, Natalia Narskaya, a vocal teacher who left Russia, **is being held** at pre-trial detention center No. 18 in Almaty, the largest city of Kazakhstan, for two months. In Russia, a criminal case on extremism was opened against her. Yakut (Native population of Yakutia in Eastern Siberia) activist Aikhal Ammosov (Igor Ivanov), persecuted under the article on discrediting the army, **was placed** in the Almaty pre-trial detention center «because of an extradition request.»

This month 44 OVD-Info lawyers helped 68 defendants in 58 criminal «anti-war» cases in 37 cities and one urban-type settlement. Our defenders went for 1 search and 2 interrogations in Yekaterinburg, Moscow and St. Petersburg as well.

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ADMINISTRATIVE CASES

8122

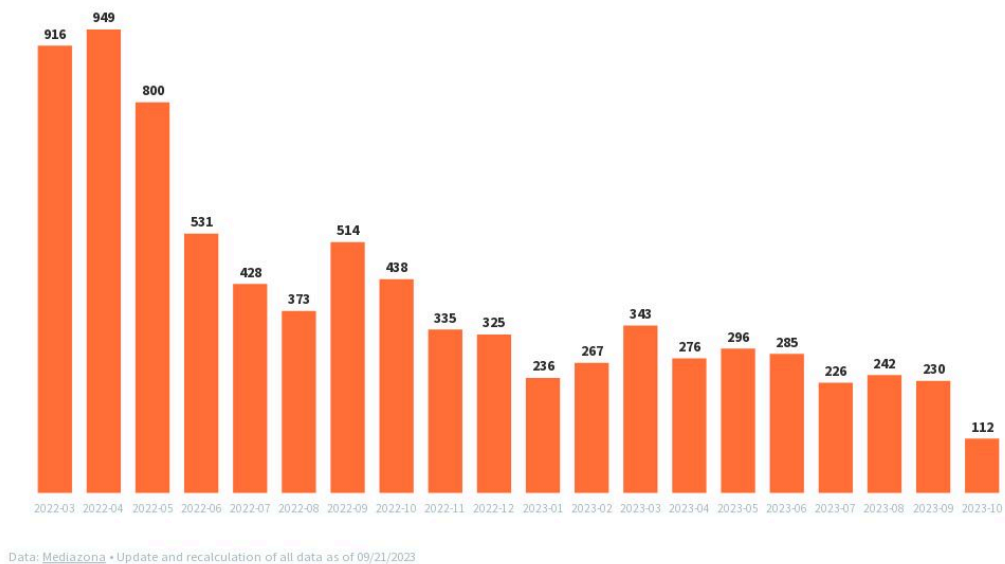
cases under Article 20.3.3 (“Discreditation”)

According to Mediazona as of 19.10.2023



In one day, 15 protocols **were drawn up** against St. Petersburg resident Ilya Khrapko under the article on discrediting the Russian army (Article 20.3.3 of the Code of Administrative Offences). Two protocols **were drawn up** against Artem Burlov, Buriat (Native population of Eastern Siberia) producer, under the same article. He supposes he was denounced by Buryat officials, whom he criticized for corruption.

Initiation of cases under Article 20.3.3



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This month OVD-info defenders participated in 58 administrative court cases.

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EXTRAJUDICIAL PRESSURE

558

cases of extrajudicial pressure for anti-war stance since 24 February 2022

Extrajudicial methods of persecution were used especially actively this month in Russian universities. Thus, Nikita Raychuk **was expelled** from Krasnodar (South of European Russia) University because of criticism of the full-scale invasion in Ukraine, and activist Dmitry Kuzmin **was expelled** from the Herzen Pedagogical University in St. Petersburg.

In St. Petersburg university lector Viktor Kornienko **was fired** after denunciation by State Duma deputy Yana Lantratova for

his anti-war position. Kornienko has been teaching at this university for 42 years. The artistic director of the Novosibirsk (Central Siberia) State Philharmonic, Vladimir Kaluzhsky, **lost his job** after a denunciation. Philologist Svetlana Drugoveyko-Dolzhanskaya, who acted as an expert for the defense in the criminal case of Sasha Skochilenko, **was fired** from St. Petersburg State University. Among other things, the activists who wrote a denunciation on Kaluzhsky noted that «his son Nikolai lives in Berlin, publishes anti-Russian posts, and his father 'likes' them, that is expresses his attitude.»



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BLOCKING AND CENSORSHIP



resources blocked by Roskomnadzor
between between 24 September 2023 and 23 October 2023

According to Roskomsvoboda

The online newspaper *Vecherniye Vedomosti* (Evening News) **was fined** 110 thousand rubles, and the newspaper's **editor-in-chief** was fined 195 thousand rubles because of the coverage of pacifist actions. He published posts about detentions of local residents who chanted pacifist slogans. At court, Interior Ministry Major Otar Amoev **stated** that journalists did not comply with censorship and discredited the army by «reflecting the wrong information.»

Roskomnadzor, under the threat of blocking, **forced** the Krasnoyarsk (large city in Eastern Siberia) edition *Prospekt Mira* to delete news about a local resident Irina Krynina, who went to Kiev to join her husband, kept prisoner by the Armed Forces of Ukraine.

Among other things, we're **blocked** this month the website of the Albanian publication *Bota Sot* because of a text about a participant in the war with Ukraine, who previously took part in wars on the territory of the former Yugoslavia, the personal website of the writer Linor Goralik, who was previously **included** in the register of «foreign agents», and the website of **Donbass SOS** organization, whose members help victims of Russia's actions in the occupied territories of Luhansk and Donetsk regions.

LINKS TO OTHER OVD-INFO DATA AND REPORTS

- Wartime repression reports. September 2023, August 2023, July 2023, June 2023, May 2023, April 2023, 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 «Hi війні»
- 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.

More to read



Memory Wars

Alexey Uvarov explains civil society's struggle to commemorate repression victims.