

Masha Chertok for OVD-Info @mashachertochka

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Repressions Report. May 2024

Русская версия

Repressions against critics of the authorities, people who oppose the war, and violators of public morality, continue in Russia. OVD-Info tells about these and other important news in a new report.

PERSECUTIONS DUE TO ANTI-WAR STANCE

>950

people faced criminal prosecution because of their anti-war stance by mid-June 2024

Russians who have spoken out against the war with Ukraine continue to face pressure within the country. In May, Ilya Baburin, a 24-year-old activist from Novosibirsk, was **sentenced** to 25 years in prison in a case involving a failed arson attack on a military recruitment centre, while Sergei Veselov, a blogger from the Ivanovo region, was **given** more

than two years in a penal colony for a video titled «Don't confuse Germans with Hitlerites and Russians with Putinites». At the beginning of June, a new criminal case was brought against him under the article on confidential cooperation with a foreign state.

After being convicted, those persecuted because of their anti-war stance continue to face pressure. New cases are brought against them (as happened, for example, with former municipal deputy [Aleksei Gorinov](#)), and they face denials of adequate medical care despite their serious illnesses (like Kaliningrad activist [Igor Baryshnikov](#) and St. Petersburg gymnasium student [Yegor Balazeikin](#)).

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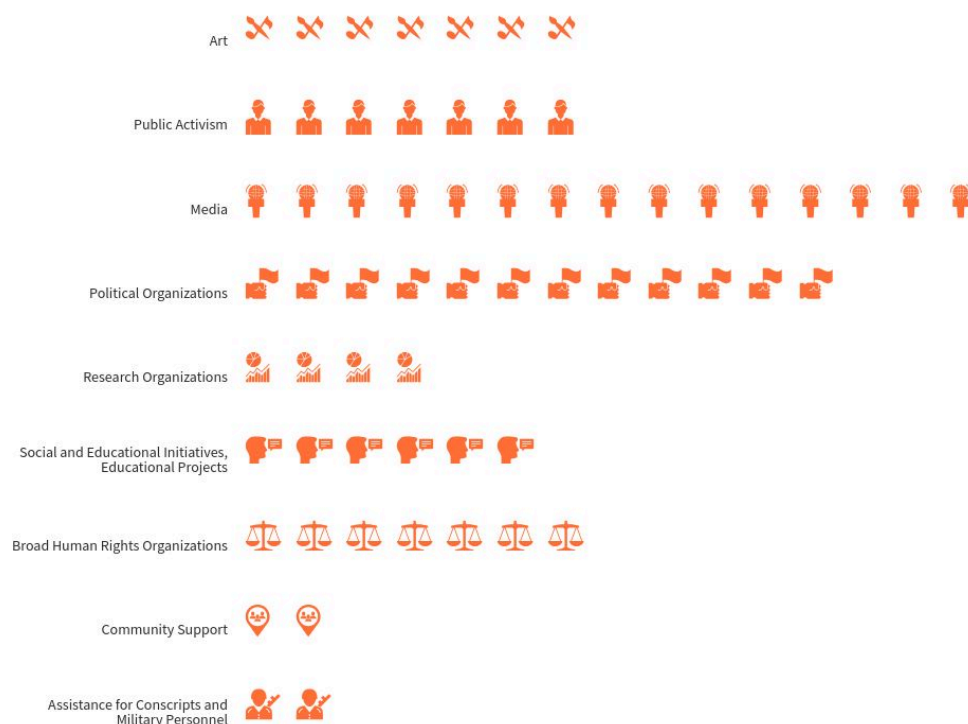
Many of these people are not ready to give up their convictions, despite the pressure they face in prison. For example, Natalia Filonova, a pensioner from Ulan-Ude convicted after taking part in an anti-mobilisation action, said in May that she refused a presidential pardon because

it required an **admission** of guilt. In the colony, the woman was registered as «prone to extremism» and sent into solitary confinement. She is also denied visits from her family.

OVD-Info maintains a regularly updated **infographic** on people facing criminal prosecution because of their anti-war stance.

‘FOREIGN AGENTS’ AND ‘UNDESIRABLE’ ORGANISATIONS

«Foreign agents»



Данные: [ИноТекст](#) • На 31 мая 2024

*в графике не учитываются общества с ограниченной ответственностью, которые «иноагенты» обязаны создавать для подачи отчетов в Минюст

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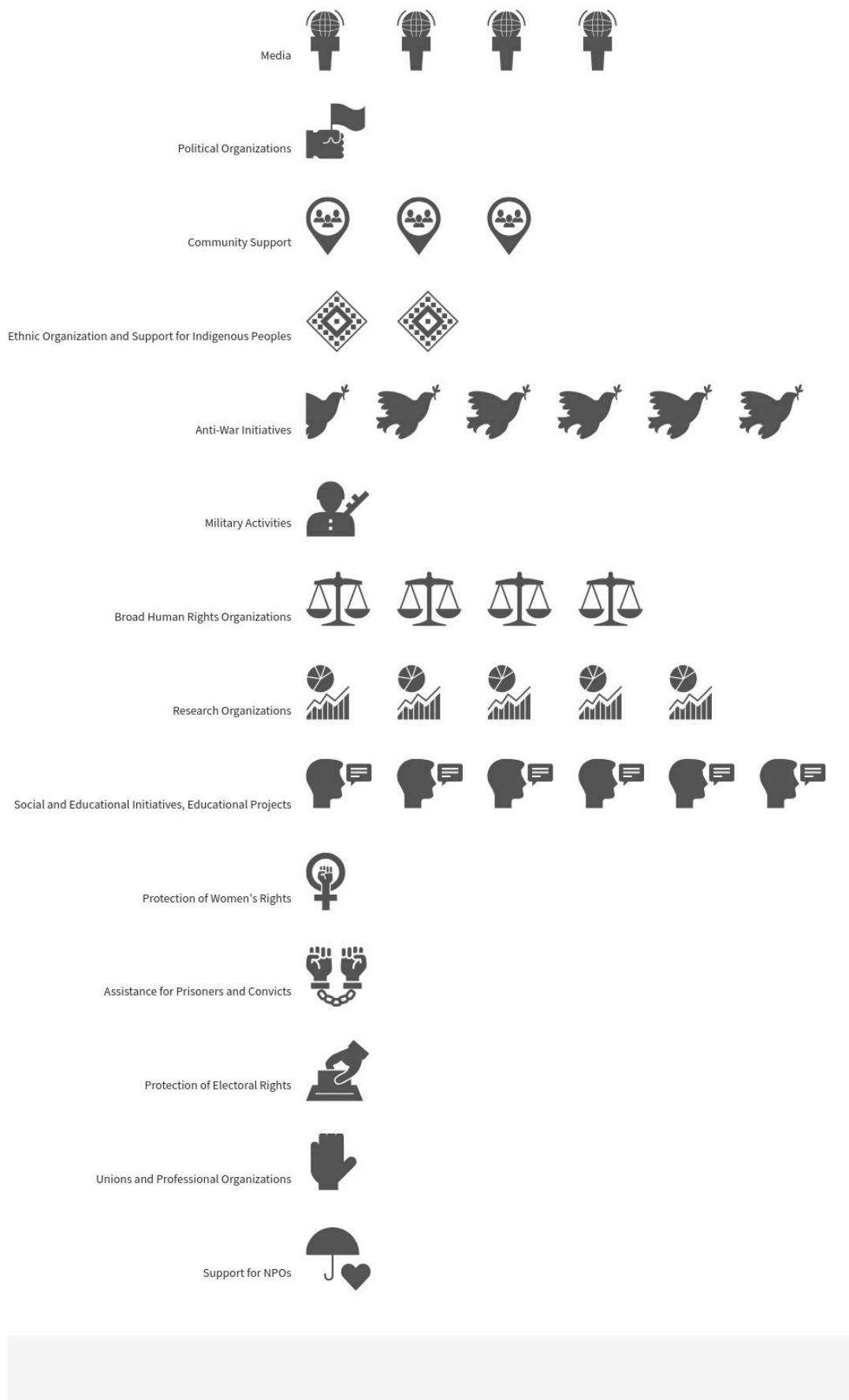
At the end of May, the Way Home movement of wives of mobilised people and its activist Maria Andreeva, as well as former Russian presidential candidate Ekaterina Duntsova

and human rights activist Marina Litvinovich were **added** to the register of «foreign agents». In the same month, Vladimir Putin **signed** a law banning foreign agents from participating in elections not only as candidates but also as observers, authorised representatives and trustees of candidates.

More and more criminal cases are being brought against people recognised as foreign agents for violating the relevant legislation (Roskomnadzor **reported** that 25 cases have already been brought). Many of the people involved in these cases are outside Russia, which is why the law enforcement agencies put them first on the federal and then international wanted list. Journalist and foreign agent Bohdan Bakaleyko **said** that Russian law enforcers asked him to give a receipt for his residence in Germany in order not to waste time on these formalities.

At the same time, protocols on violations of foreign agency legislation are not only drawn up for people already in the register. In June, the first administrative cases **came to light** against Russian residents who, according to the law enforcement agencies, were engaged in foreign agency activities without reporting themselves to the Ministry of Justice. Three «violations» of the relevant legislation could give rise to criminal proceedings.

«Undesirable organisations»



Over the course of the last six months the amount of cases where people were prosecuted for participating in activities of «undesirable organisations» grew significantly. The list of prosecuted people includes **ex-deputy of Yaroslavl Duma** (she worked with **American Councils for International Education** 20 years ago), a **resident of Abakan** (she reposted a video from Yoshkin Kot project, which the court considered to be a part of Open Russia), and staff members of the media website Meduza, including Galina Timchenko, its founder. She has **provided the following comment** to the case: «As usual, the case was initiated by clumsy wankers. I am not just participating in an undesirable organisation, I am in charge of it.»

Meanwhile, the State Duma was unhappy about the undesirable organisation law being too narrow. At the beginning of June, the Lower Chamber of Russian parliament **passed** a package of laws that expanded the meaning of «undesirable organisation». These amendments allow applying the label not only to private companies, but also organisations founded by a foreign government.

«Extremist organisations»

2

persons are enough to create an extremist association as per the Prosecution office of St. Petersburg.

In May 2024 the Prosecution office of St. Petersburg **filed a case** to label the journalist Alexander Nevzorov and his wife Lidiya as an «extremist association». If the court agrees with the prosecution, this might be the smallest extremist association in history.

>800

Jehova Witnesses are prosecuted as extremists

At the same time people of various confessions are being prosecuted en masse. At least seven Jehova Witnesses were sentenced in May, and six residents of Karachaevo-Cherkessia republic were **detained** over the case of their association with At-Takfir wal-Hijra.

PRESSURE ON LGBTQ COMMUNITY

1M

rubles fine for Kremlin-run Channel One due to “LGBT-propaganda”

In May Artyom Fokin, the president of Irida — LGBTQ association from Samara — was **searched** under a case of extremism. In Orenburg three staff members of the local bar «Pose» are **suspects** in the case of the «International extremist LGBT movement».

Meanwhile, prosecutions under the «LGBT propaganda» article often target people and organisations loyal to the government. For example, in May, Russia’s biggest national TV channel Perviy Kanal **received** a 1-million-ruble fine for putting the wrong age rating for the movie Dnuykha; the chairman of Youth Parliament of State Duma Daniil Morozov was **arrested** for 15 days for his old posts containing symbols of the «international extremist movement».

FREEDOM OF SPEECH

The Russian Constitutional Court **stated** that there are no issues with people being prosecuted for their old social media posts. The judges declined to hear the plea of Elena Selkova, an ex-municipal-deputy from Moscow, who was fined for her old posts with symbols of Smart Voting. Despite the fact that this project of Alexey Navalny was prohibited only in June 2021, and Selkova's post dates back to 2019, the court maintained that Elena should have «ceased to display» the symbols in her old post on her own.

Calls for terrorism, extremism, and anti-state actions

Various Russian people continue to be prosecuted for their statements on **the war with Ukraine**, on the case of **Dariya Trepova**, about **siloviki**, about **Vladimir Putin** and even about **Elvira Nabiullina**.

In addition to that, a journalist Nadezhda Kevorkova was **detained** at the beginning of May under the case of justifying terrorism — following the repost of her late colleague's Okhran Jemal's post on Taliban. By the end of the month The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and The Ministry of Justice reported to Putin that Taliban can be excluded from the list of terrorist organisations. However, the judge on Kevorkova's process **refused** to take into account even previous positive remarks of Russian diplomats on talibs.



*Nadezhda Kevorkova in court, Moscow, 7 May 2024 /
Photo: SOTA*

Cases on desecration of symbols

Law enforcement officers continue to persecute for «inappropriate» actions near symbols significant to the authorities. In May, a 21-year-old citizen of Tuva **got a prison sentence** for a drunken escapade near the Eternal Flame memorial. A communist from Primorye **was sentenced** to three years in prison for mimicking the «execution» of a memorial plaque dedicated to a White Army general. In the same region, vice-president of the Yabloko party is **under investigation** for her Victory day greetings in 2021: law enforcement officers believe that her social media post contains «knowingly false information on activities of the USSR».

Hooliganism and provocations are also becoming pretexts to initiate cases of hurting religious feelings. In May, such a case was initiated, among others, against a **minor girl from Kuban** for shooting a video where she imitated taking drugs from the icon of St. Nicholas Wondermaker. A group of adolescents from Stavropol region **is being persecuted**

under the same article for using the New Testament as fuel to grill meat, while **the owner of a Ekaterinburg BDSM club** — for placing thematic labels with «sins» at one of their parties.

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

Apart from prohibiting events, the government continued to exercise pressure on places of activists' leisure. Ten participants of a board games event organized by the Russian Libertarian Party were **arrested** in Moscow's «Open Space». Similarly, the St. Petersburg bar «Fogel» that hosted numerous political discussions, **had to suspend** its activities.

Case of the Baymak protests



people are prosecuted in a case concerning protests in support of Bashkir activist Fail Alsynov

In Bashkortostan, dozens of people, arrested after a rally in support of local activist Fail Alsynov, remain detained. Last month, his sentence was **upheld** in appeals — 4 years of imprisonment for publicly speaking on ecological problems. According to the activist's brother, after being transferred to the colony, Alsynov was **beaten up**.

GUARDING OF PUBLIC MORALS

Politically active citizens and law enforcement officers continue to protect public morals by reporting others. For instance, some visitors of a bar in Voronezh were enraged after seeing two other female visitors kissing; the latter had **a «LGBT propaganda» protocol drawn up** against them. Similarly, the owner of a BDSM club in Ekaterinburg is being

prosecuted for hurting religious feelings after a photoshoot with religious symbols.

The fight against obscenity had spread to other institutions as well: the prosecutor's office in the Krasnoyarsk region **demand**ed to withdraw Gregory Oster's 1997 children's book «Naughty Advice» from sales since it contained descriptions of «antisocial actions». Later, the prosecutor decided not to file any action in court, but the book was gone from the stalls all the same.

Order is also maintained in religious institutions: a Greek Catholic Parish was liquidated in Omsk after an icon of Stepan Bandera **was found** there. Likewise, authorities of Slavyansk-on-Kuban requested the demolition of an Orthodox church since one of its priests **had expressed** negative opinion on the Russian army. In both cases, criminal prosecution was initiated. The request to demolish the church was later denied in court.

REPRESSIONS AGAINST CITIZENS OF ANNEXED CRIMEA

Local activists from annexed Crimea still face pressure. In May searches were **conducted** at the homes of Bekir Mamutov and Seyran Ibragimov, the editor-in-chief and founder (respectively) of a newspaper Quirim, as well as at the newspaper's office. Likewise, local human rights activist Emil Kurbedinov **was fined** for a social media post about mobilization.

The family of the painter Bogdan Ziza, who was sentenced and deported to Russia, **has not been able** to get in touch with him for several months. At the same time, defendants in a case of Islamist party Hizb-ut-Tahrir **are continuously denied** qualified medical aid.

