



n the cover: Igor Pokusin, Pavel Kushnir, Kirill Buzmakov / Collage: OVD-Info

11.10.2024

Persecution of the anti-war movement report. May-September 2024

Russian version

Thirty-one months ago, Russia launched a full-scale war against Ukraine. Immediately following the anti-war protests in the initial days of the invasion, an unprecedented wave of repression unfolded in Russia.

OVD-Info continues to gather and analyse data on the persecution of anti-war expression in Russia and the annexed Republic of Crimea.

Previously, our report had a monthly format, now it will be published quarterly. That said, we continue to publish data on persecution for anti-war stance on a monthly basis. You can find it [here](#).

CRIMINAL CASES

3

defendants in anti-war cases died in custody
or due to its consequences

*According to OVD-Info data from 24.05.24 to 20.09.24

In June, Igor Pokusin **died** in one of the penal colonies in Krasnoyarsk Krai (Siberia). In January, he was sentenced to eight years and one month in a strict regime penal colony on charges of attempting to join the AFU. Previously, the man was employed as a civil aviation pilot, in particular, he had been spraying fertilizers over fields, but in recent years, due to health problems, he worked as a taxi driver.

On July 27, 39-year-old pianist and anti-war activist Pavel Kushnir, who was accused of publicly justifying terrorism due to posting a video on his YouTube channel, **died** in the Birobidzhan pre-trial detention centre after a dry hunger strike. Before his arrest, Kushnir worked at the Philharmonic, published his anti-war book, and ran a YouTube channel containing anti-fascist manifestos.

After having been tortured in a pretrial detention centre, Kirill Buzmakov, a defendant in an anti-war case, **died** at his home in Zheleznovodsk (Stavropol Krai, South of European Russia). He was one of the participants in a Telegram chat created by a group of bikers who were later accused of preparing a terrorist attack. During his arrest in the fall of 2022, Buzmakov's facial bone was broken and he did not receive any medical care for a year and a half. To hide the traces of torture, the man was not taken to the hospital and was promised treatment if he gave the necessary testimony. He received no treatment, the injury had been sustaining inflammation during all this time, and he assumed that the tumor was malignant. 'At first it was easy to treat, but they let me rot. They denied me treatment for over a year, even the biopsy and histology exam', he wrote to Vladimir Burmay, a co-defendant. Buzmakov was placed on house arrest only in May 2024, when his condition was already extremely severe. He was operated in civil hospital on May 28 and died on July 20.

defendants in anti-war cases were subjected to pressure or violence by security forces

According to OVD-Info data from 24.05.24 to 20.09.24

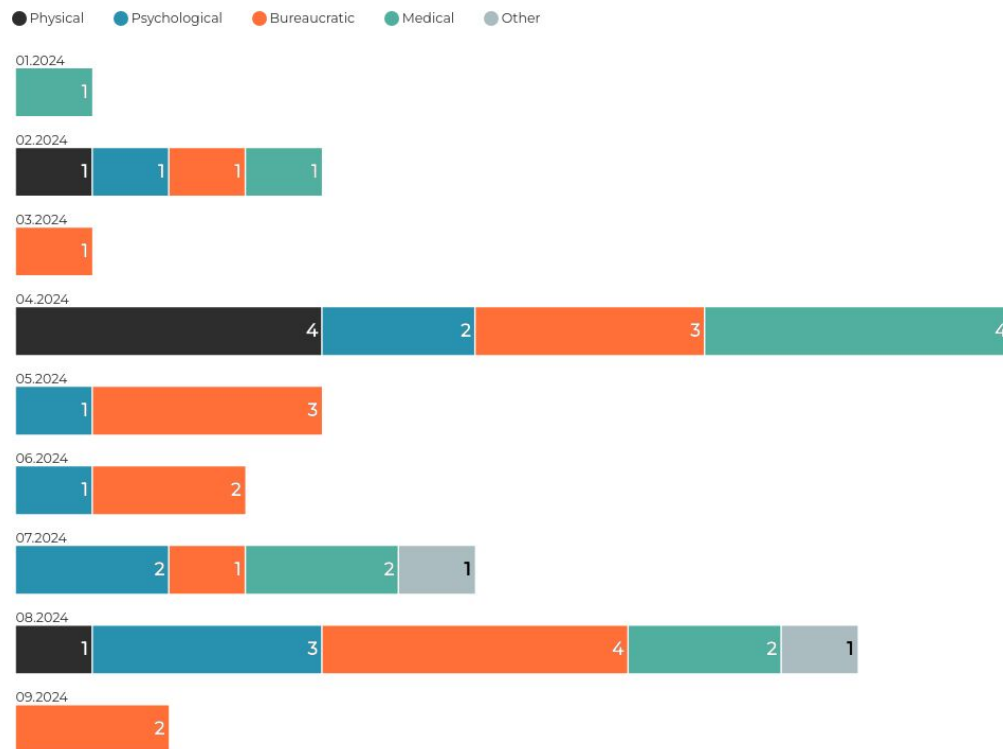
One of the defendants being pressured was 60-year-old Sergei Chuikov, accused of repeated discreditation of the army (Article 280.3 of the Criminal Code) and justifying terrorism (Article 205.2 of the Criminal Code) due to anti-war publications. On the morning of August 30, a group of security forces, including police and FSB officers, **burst into his home**. During the search, Chuikov was beaten and forced to provide the password to his phone. After that, the security forces blindfolded Sergei and took him to an unknown location. According to himself, he was tortured there: he was beaten and an electric current was connected to his handcuffs; traces of torture and discoloured areas remained on his skin.

Yegor Balazeikin, who was convicted of arson at a military recruitment centre, **received murder threats** by a former so-called «Wagner Group» member who was held in the same cell in pre-trial detention centre. Then the 18-year-old boy was transferred to a flea- and bedbug-ridden solitary confinement cell, where he had to fight with rats for his food. Yegor spent 6 days there without water, with a non-functioning lavatory. Though the boy suffers from autoimmune hepatitis he was not given any medication throughout the entire transit period. Moreover, the staff of the Vologda pre-trial detention centre took away all of the five- or six-month supplies of medication and did not send it to the next detention centre the boy was placed in.

Another person with special health demands was also refused treatment. Andrey Shabanov from Samara in the southern Volga region has a serious disability. For 5 months he was denied medication, technical rehabilitation equipment

and even painkillers. Only on September 6 Shabanov started receiving medical care for the first time during his stay in the pre-trial detention centre and was granted permission to call his mother for the first time.

Cases of pressure on anti-war defendants by month



Data: [QVD-Info](#) · As of 23 September 2024

* A Flourish data visualization

We have recorded at least 139 cases of pressure against defendants in criminal anti-war cases. We distinguish the following types of pressure:

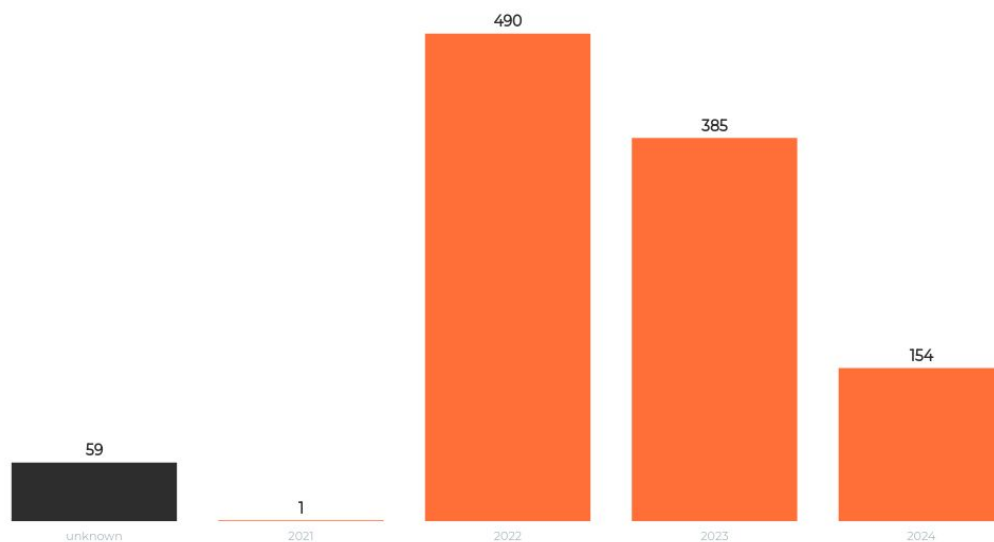
- physical: beatings, torture and other use of physical force;
- psychological: threats, humiliation, manipulation and other cases of pressure: for example, a prisoner is placed in a cell with harsh conditions;
- bureaucratic: confiscation of letters, limitations on care packages, restriction of access to certain areas in the confinement centre such as library. This also includes refusal to get stationery and other bureaucratic measures to exert pressure;
- medical: refusal to provide medication, medical care or poor quality of care;
- other: some other instances of pressure: for example, a prisoner's blanket is taken away, or they are denied food when in court for a long time, or they are denied sleep

1057

defendants in anti-war criminal cases from
24.02.2022 to 22.09.202

Since 24 February, 2024 to 22 September of current year 198 people became defendants in anti-war criminal cases. Among them are Elena Nikolayenkova, a **nurse** from the westernmost Russian city of Kaliningrad; Makar Nikolayev, **the winner** of the contest «My country, my Russia»; two **schoolchildren** born in 2006 from Nizhniy Novgorod in central Volga region (their persecution began after the school administration has reported them to the police).

**Number of sentences of «anti-war» cases
by year**



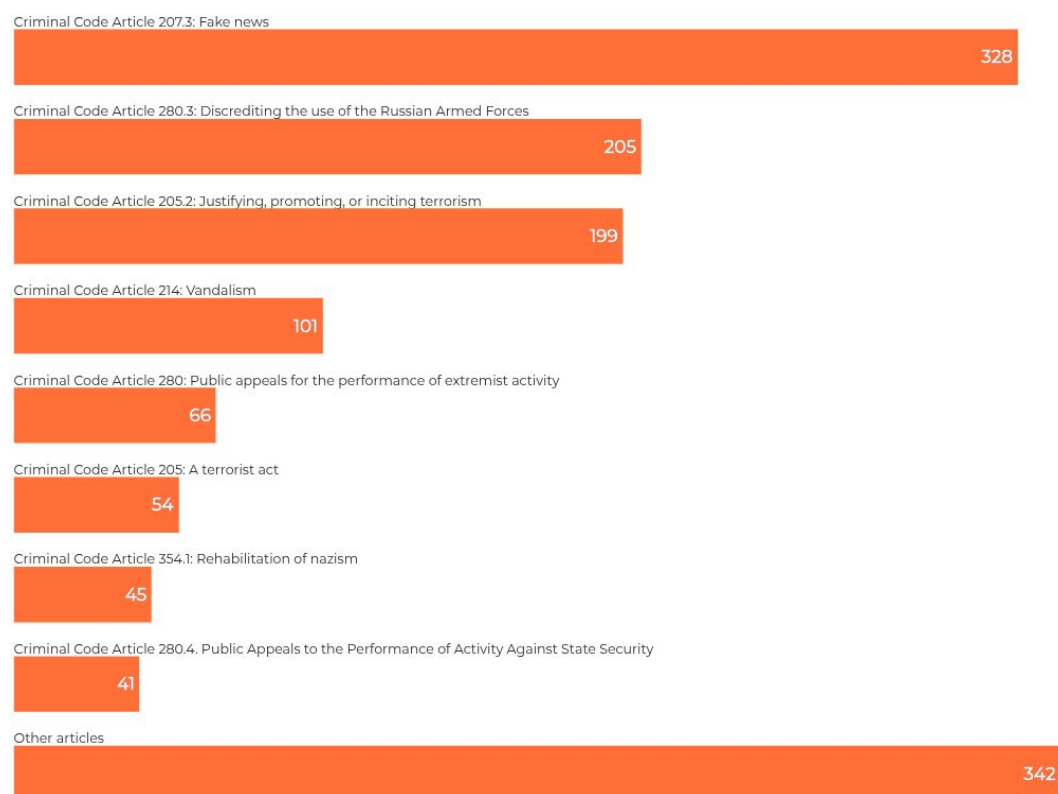
Data [QVD-Info](#) · As of 24.05.2024
Our statistics include a case from 2021. This happened because one of the defendants had a case about "fakes" linked to an older case that was initiated in 2021.

✱ A Flourish data visualization

Over the past three months 95 sentences were pronounced against anti-war defendants, 54 of them containing imprisonment measures.

Number of Defendants in «Anti-War» Cases Prosecuted Under Each of the Article

Defendants that are being prosecuted under several articles at once are included in the column of each article



Данные [ОВД-Инфо](#) · На 24 сентября 2024

✳ A Flourish data visualization

Since 1 January, 2024, OVD-Info lawyers have helped 90 defendants in anti-war criminal cases. Our defenders have attended 23 interrogations and 5 searches related to anti-war criminal cases.

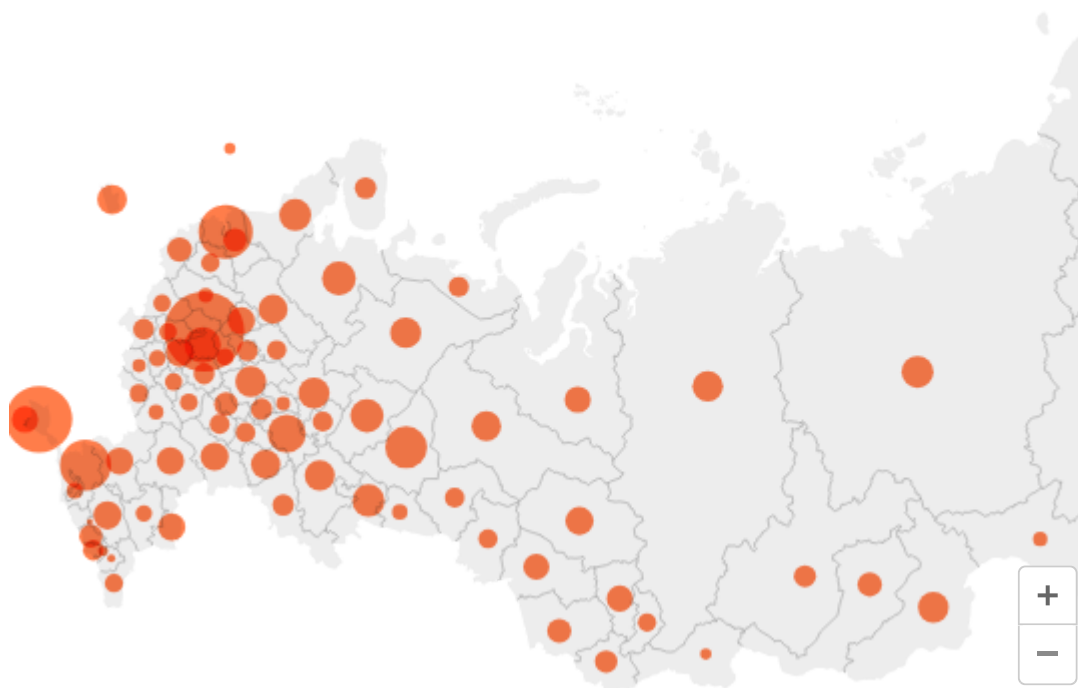
ADMINISTRATIVE CASES

9369

cases under the Article 20.3.3 of the Code of Administrative Offences of the Russian Federation («Discreditation»)

According to OVD-info data as of 22.09.2024

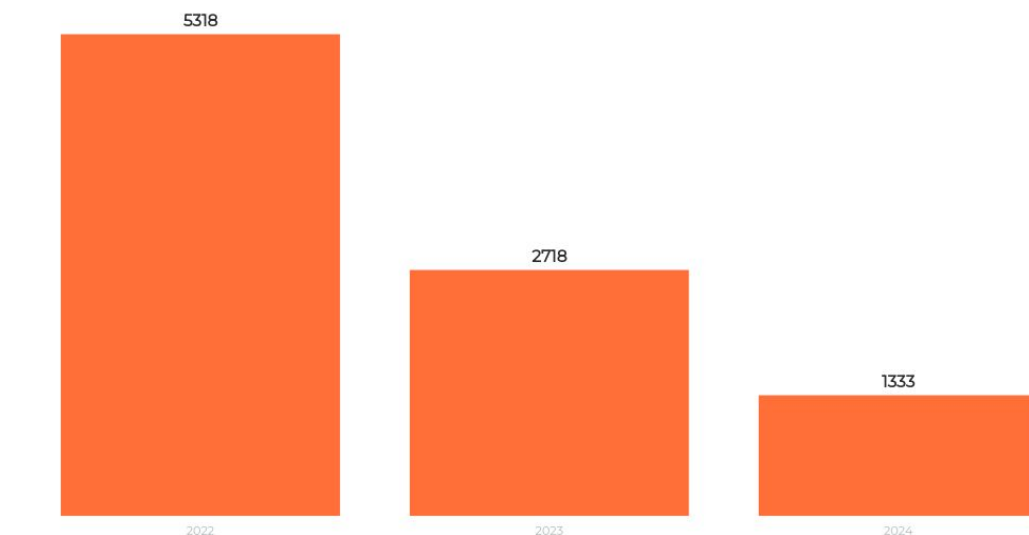
Number of cases under Article 20.3.3 of the CAO (Discreditation) filed in courts in Russia and in the annexed Republic of Crimea since March 2022



OVD-Info collects data on repressions by Russian authorities in annexed Crimea because we have the* Seven reports **were drawn up against Oksana Roshchina, an artist from Mordovia region in central Russia, for the discreditation of the Russian army due to her posts and comments on VKontakte social media. Courts fined **a resident of Pskov** in the West of European Russia, and **a resident of Krasnodar** in southern Russia, Ilya Kharchenko, three times under Article 20.3.3.

Meanwhile, two reports were **drawn up** against Moscow resident and National Bolshevism supporter Maria Tillert on charges of discrediting the army for collection of humanitarian aid for this very army.

Number of cases under Article 20.3.3 of the Code of Administrative Offences («Discreditation») by year



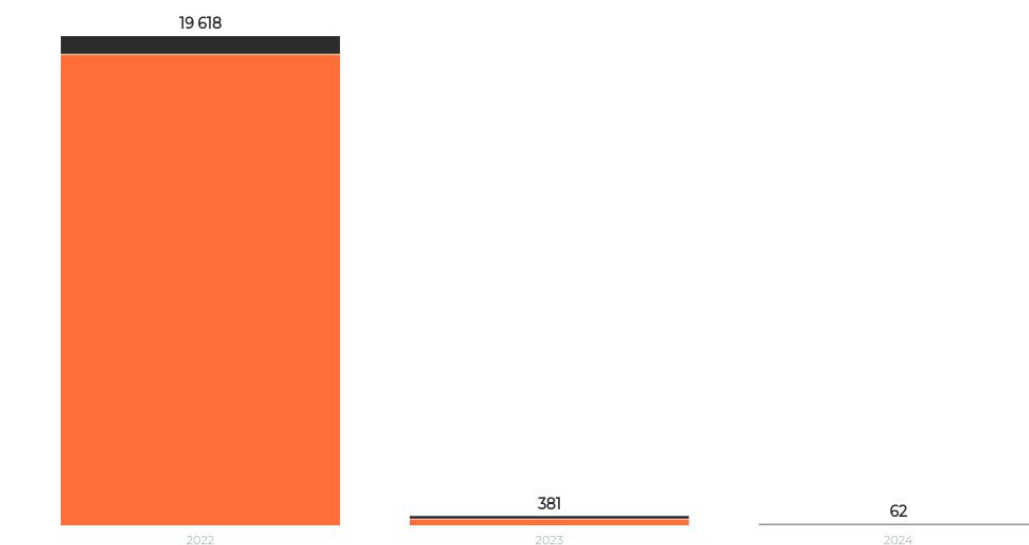
Data: [QVD-Info](#) · As of 23.09.2024

✱ A Flourish data visualization

RESTRICTION OF THE RIGHT TO FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

20 061

detentions for anti-war stance between 24 February 2022 and 22 September 2024



● Only during public rallies
● For symbolics, posts, statements, post factum and preventatively

Data: [QVD-Info](#) · As of 23.09.2024

We are aware of more than 20,000 anti-war detentions since the start of the full-scale invasion, among them the **detention** of three residents of the village of Popovka in annexed Crimea. The law enforcers believed that the men were loudly playing Ukrainian songs, including those insulting Vladimir Putin, and violated public order.

On August 21, Nikita Linnik **was detained** in St. Petersburg near the Moskovsky railway station for holding a solitary picket with a poster reading «No to War». During the elections on September 8, observer Marina Popova was detained in St. Petersburg — she was **accused** of throwing a ballot with the inscription «No to War» into the ballot box. PEC member Dmitriy Gorodov **was also arrested** because of anti-war publications in his Telegram channel.

Map of detentions



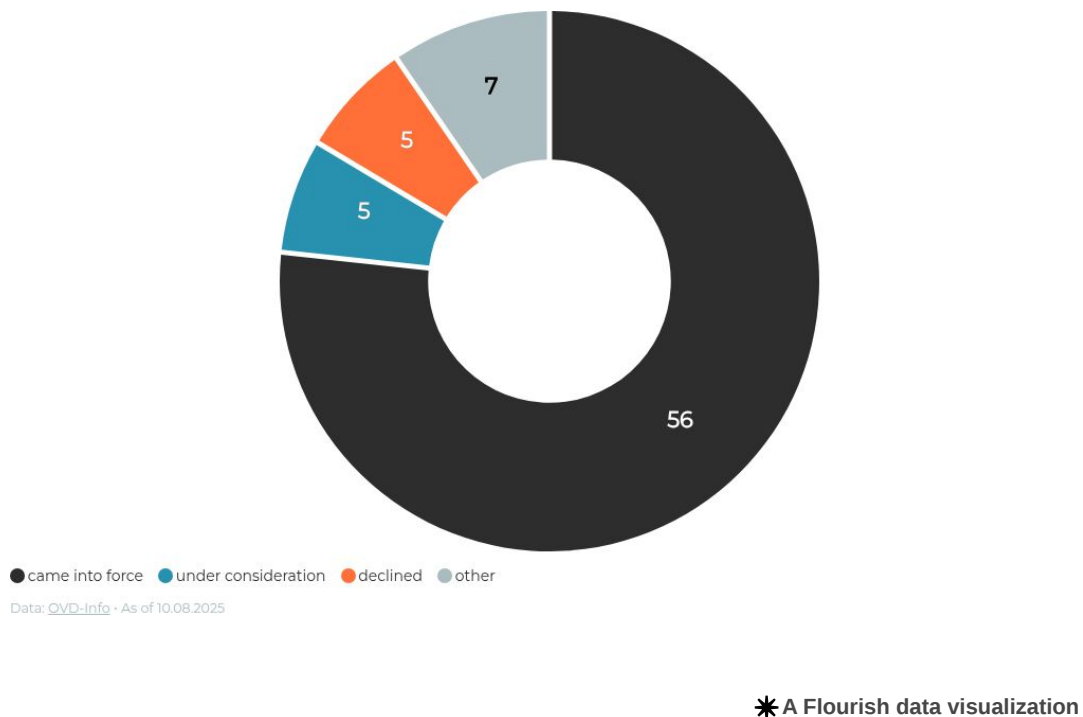
**OVD-Info collects data on repressions by Russian authorities in annexed Crimea because we have the*

REPRESSIONS AT THE LEGISLATIVE LEVEL

64

repressive laws have already passed first reading

Repressive draft laws' status as of 23.09.2024

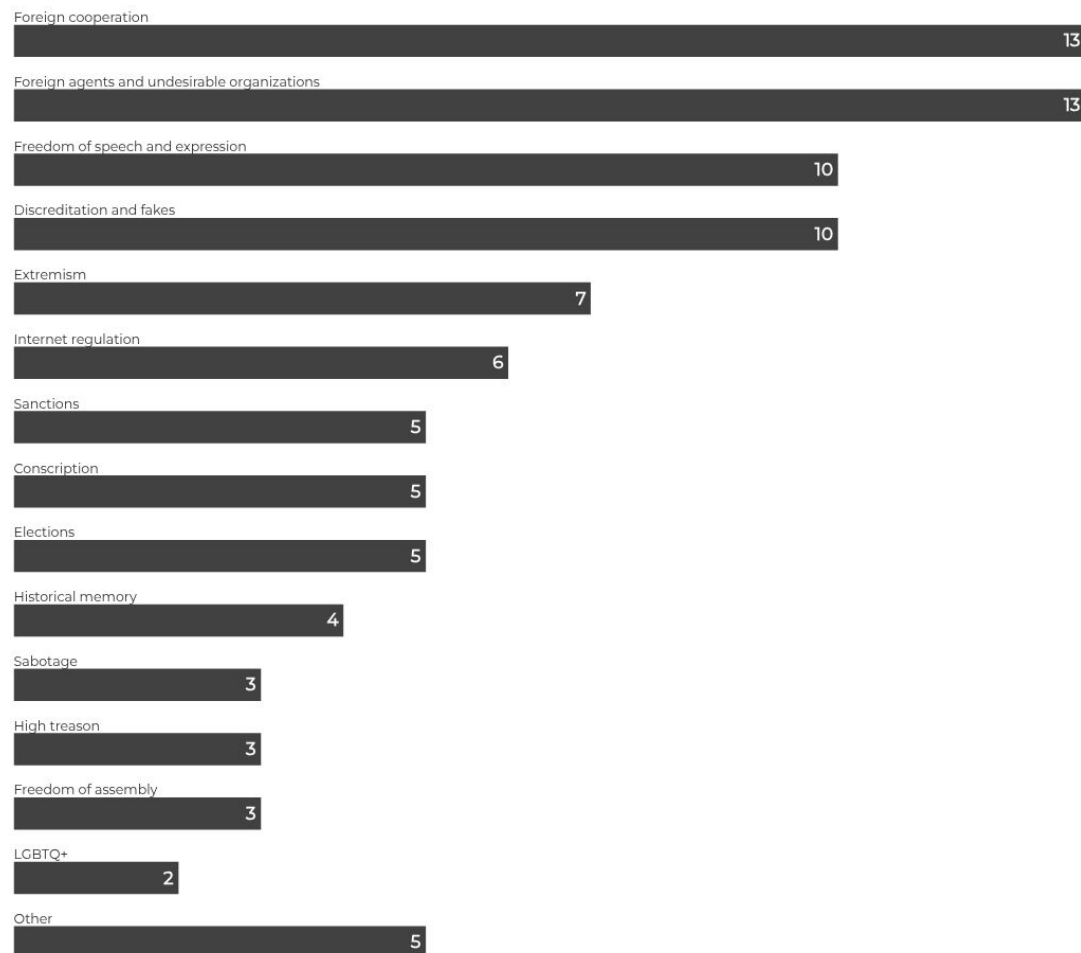


A draft law **was submitted** to the State Duma on 15 July, by which the authorities plan to expand the criteria for including citizens and organizations in the Rosfinmonitoring list containing information on persons involved in extremism or terrorism. On July 25, a bill to ban advertising on the resources owned by «extremist» and «undesirable» organizations **was passed** in the first reading.

On July 29, amendments **were introduced** in the State Duma that will oblige the owners of Telegram channels with an audience of more than 10 thousand followers to submit information about themselves to Roskomnadzor — the bill was already signed on August 8. By the same law,

Roskomnadzor obliged bloggers having more than 10,000 subscribers to refer only to state approved sources.

Repressive legislation topics since the start of the full-scale invasion



Data: OVD-Info · As of 23.09.2024
Some laws may cover multiple themes.

* A Flourish data visualization

Extrajudicial pressure

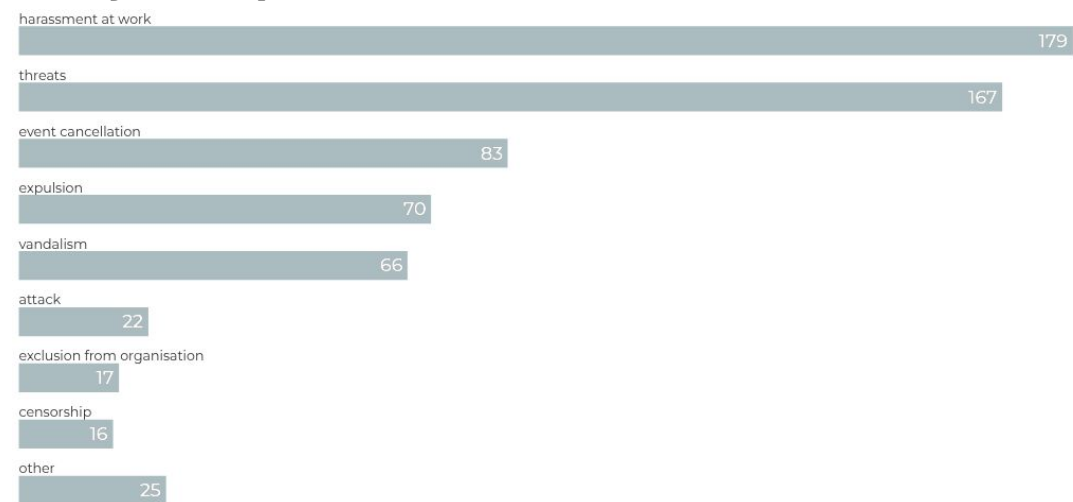
645

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

The revocation of Russian passports has become one of the new forms of extrajudicial pressure. The founders of the «Omsk Civic Association» Richard King and Daniil Chebykin, Olesya Krivtsova, a defendant in the case of repeated

discreditation of the Russian army and justification of terrorism, and human rights activist Alexander Kim **faced** this type of pressure. In addition, Vladislav Cherkashin, an anti-war activist who emigrated to Armenia, **was deprived** of Russian citizenship.

Extrajudicial pressure for anti-war stance



Data [OVD-Info](#) · As of 23 September 2024 года

✱ A Flourish data visualization

During this period, at least four clergymen suffered persecution for their anti-war stance — three of them were banned from ministry and Andrei Kudrin **was deprived** of his church ministry. The persecution is related, among other things, to their refusal to pronounce the prayer «On Holy Russia, » prescribed by the patriarch and consecrated to victory over Ukraine.

Three professors were also persecuted work — in particular, St. Petersburg State University **did not renew** the contract with the professor who attended the trials in the case of Sasha Skochilenko.

BLOCKINGS AND CENSORSHIP

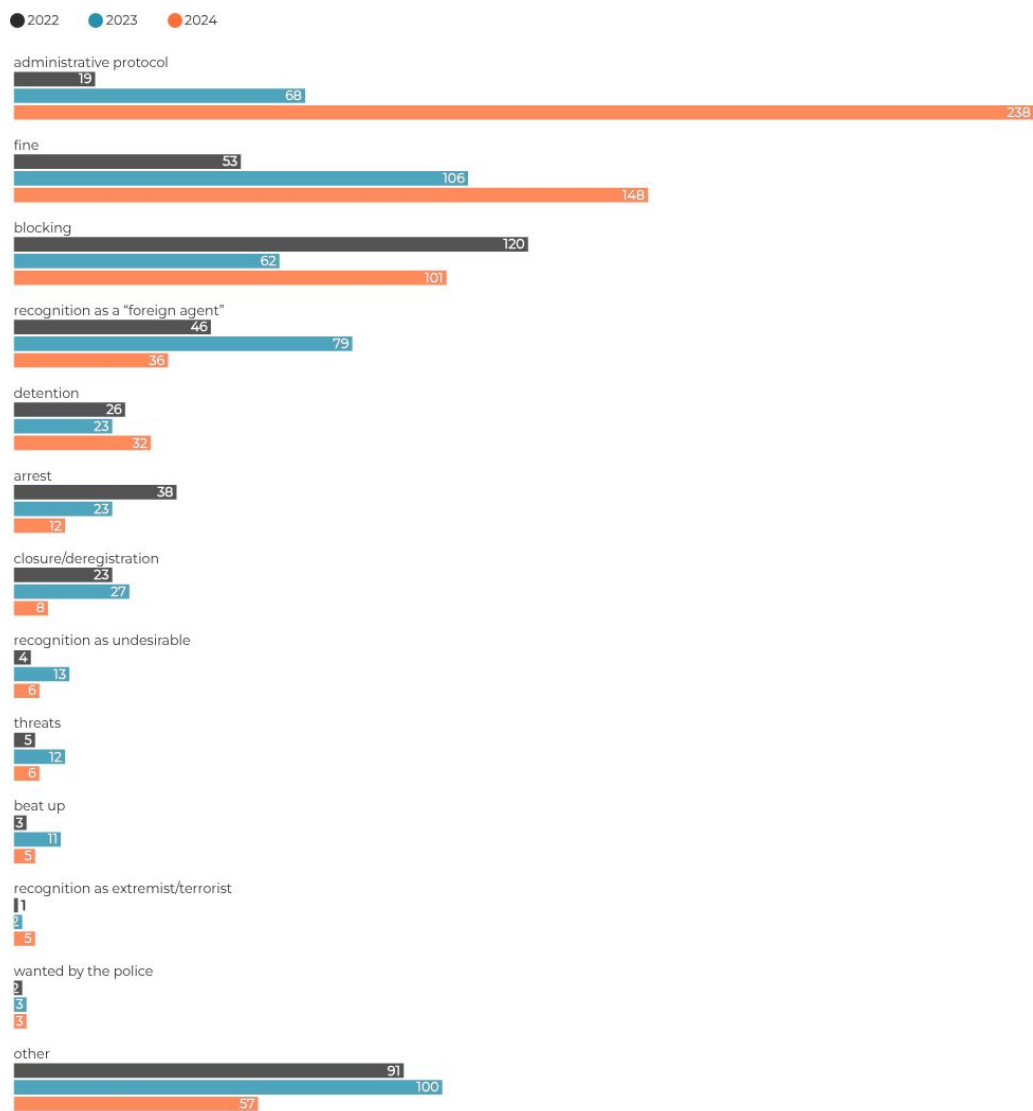
1617

cases of pressure on media, journalists and
media workers from 24.02.2022
to 23.09.2024

We are aware of more than 1,617 cases of pressure since the beginning of the full-scale invasion, and at least 657 since the beginning of 2024.

Over the last month, two media outlets announced the termination of their work due to pressure from government authorities — the «Sobesednik» newspaper and the Saratov edition of «Svobodnye Novosti». The Sobesednik newspaper's editorial board **suspended** its activities after being included in the register of «foreign agents.» «To our great regret, after the inclusion of Sobesednik-Media LLC (our founder and publisher) in the register of foreign agents by the Ministry of Justice of the Russian Federation, we are forced to suspend all editions of the Sobesednik Publishing House.» At the same time, the Russian Federal Service for Supervision of Communications and Information Technologies (Roskomnadzor) is demanding the **revocation of the license** of the Saratov edition of Svobodnye Novosti due to omitting the mention of «foreign agent» status next to the name of former Putin advisor Andrei Illarionov.

Types of pressure on journalists, media and bloggers



Data: [QVD-Info](#) · As of 23.09.2024

* A Flourish data visualization

LINKS TO OTHER OVD-INFO DATA AND REPORTS

- Persecution for anti-war views
- Wartime repression reports. May 2024, January 2024, December 2023, November 2023, October 2023, 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 «Ні війни»
- 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.