



Oleg Tyryshkin has been involved in labour union activities since the 1990s. In 2019, during protests by nurses and orderlies in Anzhero-Sudzhensk against their transfer to cleaners, he became the regional coordinator of the independent union of health workers / Photo: Meduza

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ARTICLES

## **“They hit me on the head and dragged me into the car”: elderly man detained for anti-war posts**

On June 15th, the Kemerovo Regional Court **fined** pensioner and trade union activist Oleg Tyryshkin 10,000 rubles (US\$112). He was charged with inciting hatred due to his comments about FSB employees. During his arrest, he was beaten. In the past three months, he has been fined twice for posting an image of Vladimir Putin in a Nazi uniform. In May, Tyryshkin became a suspect in a criminal case under an article on justifying terrorism.

## ОБ ЭТОМ НИКТО НЕ УЗНАЕТ

Если об этом никто не напишет. Подпишитесь на регулярные пожертвования ОВД-Инфо, чтобы плохие дела не оставались в тишине.

**ПОДПИСАТЬСЯ**

### *Русская версия*

In early June [2023], I received a phone call from the prosecutor's office asking me to come in. They told me that an administrative case had been opened against me for inciting hatred (Part 1 of Article 20.3.1 of the Administrative Offenses Code) due to comments I made on social media where I expressed my views on the FSB (*on the loyalist page «We support Putin!» under the post «About Kherson in 6 points» — OVD-Info*). I referred to the agency's employees as «dogs» and berated them some more.

This is already the third administrative case that has been filed against me. At the end of April [2023], I was **fined** 2,000 rubles (US\$22) under the article on displaying Nazi symbolism (Article 20.3 of the Administrative Offenses Code) for posting a meme of Vladimir Putin in a Nazi uniform. I reposted this image on my social media page; it was originally shared in one of opposition groups. I added a caption to the picture stating that Putin has destroyed everything in Russia.

In early May [2023], I was **fined** again for the same post. This time they picked on the caption. They imposed a fine of 30,000 rubles (US\$338) under the article on public disrespect for the authorities (Part 3 of Article 20.1 of the Administrative Offenses Code).

At the same time, in May, a criminal case was **initiated** against me. The reason was my comments on «VKontakte» regarding the death of Chechnya's leader, Akhmad Kadyrov,

in 2004. Under one of the posts, I wrote, «Good riddance.» This was considered «justification of terrorism» (part 2 of article 205.2 of the Criminal Code). Currently, I am under a travel ban.

When the prosecutor's office called me again in June, I thought to myself, «Have they gone mad or something?» A third administrative case within a year, right after the criminal charge. Nevertheless, I went to the prosecutor's office. I called my lawyer. She said that I shouldn't have gone there at all. Since at that time, I was also sick and undergoing treatment at the local hospital, they had no right to summon me anywhere. I showed the prosecutor's assistant the message from my defense attorney as proof.

He replied to me, «Stay here. The court will still take place.» «Well, goodbye then, » I replied and left. No one attempted to detain me.

But after that, prosecutor's office employees started coming to my place and my 88-year-old mother's house. They were searching for me.

I tried to leave early and come home late, so whenever they came, nobody was home. They knocked on my mother's door several times. She didn't open it. They intimidated her, saying that they would initiate another criminal case against me and put me in prison.

She replied to them, «I live alone. I won't open the door for you. Who are you anyway? Are you bandits, terrorists, and extremists?»

For about two weeks, the employees of the prosecutor's office kept coming to our addresses like that.

My lawyer told me not to go to them and not to contact them in any way, so I turned off my phone to make sure they couldn't reach me.

Nevertheless, they caught me two weeks later. I was in the garden at that time, trying to sneak away unnoticed, but they drove around the property and warned me that they would shoot me if I tried to escape.

There were three of them. They ran up and knocked me down. They hit me twice on the head and face. After that, they dragged me into the car. They said, 'We'll put you behind bars, and you'll never get out again.' They cursed heavily.

They deliberately chose such a location to ambush me, where nobody would notice them. Everything behind our garden was overgrown. The forest begins there, so the neighbors didn't see how they detained me. But even if they had seen, I don't think they would have done anything. These are people who have no knowledge of what is happening in Russia right now.

The prosecutor's office staff said they were very angry that I hadn't come to them myself. «Are we supposed to run after you like kids?» they exclaimed in indignation.

I believe that they simply couldn't proceed with the hearing without me because the punishment for inciting hatred, according to the law, is a fine of up to 20,000 rubles (US\$225) or up to 15 days of arrest. However, the prosecutor's office didn't understand what penalty the court would ultimately impose.

I personally knew that arrests under this article were not common. I thought that most likely I would be fined. But I've already got 32,000 (\$360) in fines. How am I going to pay them all off?

All the way to the prosecutor's office they intimidated me, saying that they would «lock me up» and that I would be in jail for a long time. When we arrived, they asked me in jest, «So, are you going to run away again now?» But initially, I didn't run away from them at all.

We sat for a while in the prosecutor's office. There, they intimidated me, saying, «Why do you speak out against Russia? Aren't you ashamed?» Then they took me to court, which is the building across the street, and imposed a fine of 10,000 rubles (US\$112) on me.



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At the same time, they started attacking me on the «[Kuzbass Uncensored](#)» Telegram channel. The admins went berserk after the blogger Egorov [posted](#) a YouTube video in support of me. In it, he completely trashed the police officers, told my story, and even mentioned that I am a labour veteran and an honorary blood donor in Russia.

After the video went viral, mocking posts about me started appearing on other pro-government channels. They did their best to smear my reputation.

Certainly, there are also those on the internet who share my political sentiments. They include activists as well

as ordinary individuals who learned about the case through the media.

All my relatives support me too. My mother is worried — she holds the same political views, and she thinks the police and the FSB are fascists.

Myself, I have always stood for the truth. Throughout my life, I have been involved in independent trade unions, helping medical professionals and miners. But now they have made a criminal out of me.

I think someone snitched on me. Or perhaps I attracted attention because of my trade union activities, and now they found an opportunity to get to me. I cannot exclude that possibility, but I cannot confidently assert anything. Trade unions are, after all, a form of social activism, yet I am being judged for my political views.

*Recorded by Karina Merkurjeva*

## **ЧТО Я МОГУ С ЭТИМ СДЕЛАТЬ?**

Прочитать, рассказать, поддержать. Подпишитесь на регулярные пожертвования ОВД-Инфо, чтобы как можно больше людей узнали о политических репрессиях в России сегодня.

**ПОДДЕРЖАТЬ**

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