

30.08.2023

## Wartime Repressions Report. August 2023

[Русская версия](#)

Eighteen months ago, Russia initiated a full-scale war against Ukraine. Immediately after the breakout of anti-war protests in the first days of the invasion, an unprecedented wave of repression began within Russia.

OVD-Info continues to gather and analyze data about persecutions due to anti-war stances in Russia and in the territory of the annexed Republic of Crimea.

### RESTRICTION OF THE RIGHT TO FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

# 19 786

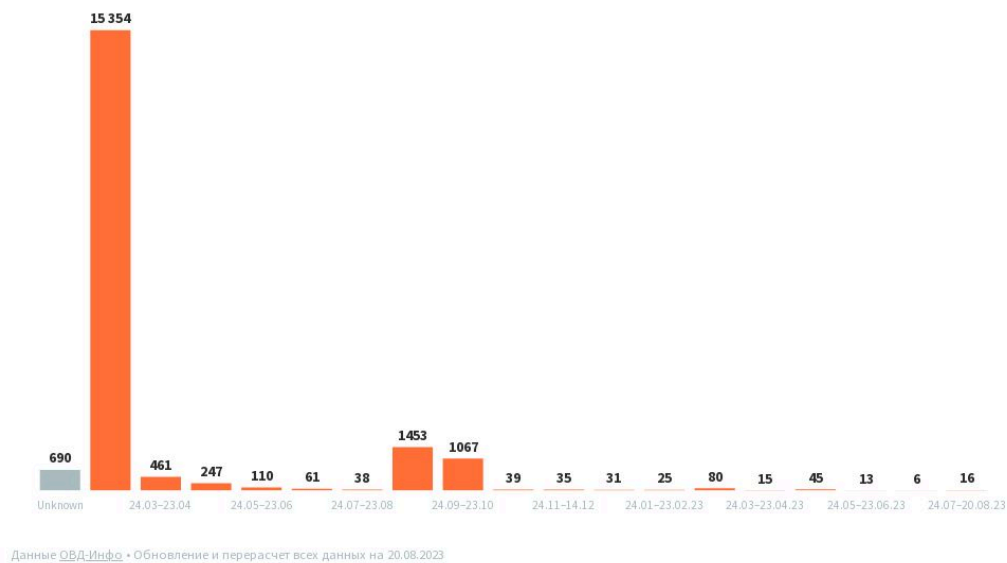
detentions for anti-war stance between 24 February 2022  
and 20 August 2023

We are aware of 19,096 detentions directly during the protests, and 326 after them. For posts on social networks,

private conversations, symbols, and other reasons, there were 364 detentions.

Also, we were able to identify gender of the detained individuals in 19,186, or 97%, of the 19,786 cases. Specifically, 8,609 detentions pertain to women involved in anti-war actions from February 24, 2022 to August 20, 2023.

Number of Detentions for Anti-War Stance by Month





On the 20th of August, four individuals conducting solitary anti-war rallies were detained. Specifically, in Khabarovsk, local police **apprehended** a resident named Bogdan Shevchenko, who took to the square holding a sign that read «No to vobla» accompanied by a fish illustration (*signs with this slogan have been used at protests to indirectly declare anti-war sentiments, because «vobla» is a type of fish, but the characteristics of the word itself, including the length and the first and last letters, mirror the word «war» in Russian*).





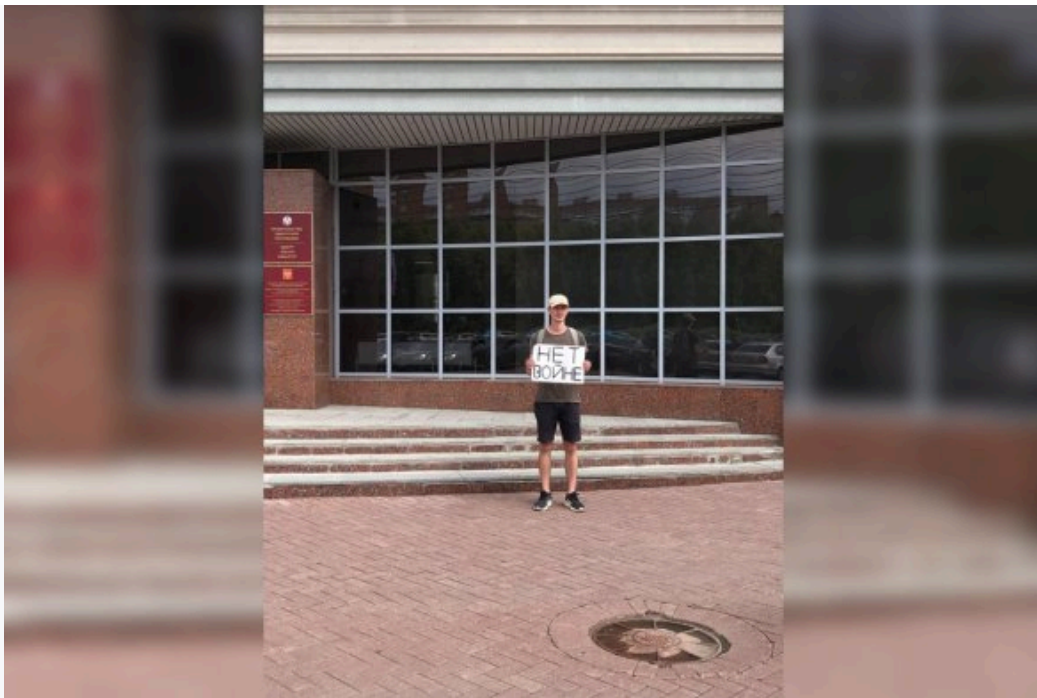
Dmitry Gvozdev in a single picket near the Vyborgskaya metro station, St. Petersburg, August 6, 2023. The police drew up an administrative protocol on discrediting the Russian army (part 1 of article 20.3.3 of the Code of Administrative Offenses). The detainee was represented by the defender from OVD-Info Olesya Vasilchenko / Photo provided by the wife of Dmitry Gvozdev



Teimuraz Kordzaia in a single picket in the center of Moscow, August 20, 2023. The police drew up a protocol on violation of the rules for participation in a public action / Photo courtesy of Teimuraz Kordzaia



Ivan Shurupov in a single picket in Kursk, July 27, 2023. The man was released from the police without a protocol / Photo courtesy of Ivan Shurupov



Fyodor Myasnikov in a single picket near the government building of Udmurtia in Izhevsk, July 25, 2023. The man was released from the police without a protocol. The detainee was represented by a lawyer from OVD-Info Evgenia Toydorova / Photo courtesy of Fyodor Myasnikov



Nikolai Borisov in a single picket in Voronezh, August 3, 2023. An administrative protocol was drawn up on discrediting the Russian army (part 1 of article 20.3.3 of the Code of Administrative Offenses). The detainee was represented by a defender from OVD-Info Daniil Polyakov / Photo courtesy: a friend of the picketer





A resident of Yekaterinburg in a single picket, August 12, 2023 / Photo provided by eyewitnesses



Igor Kornilayev in a single picket in the center of Moscow, August 13, 2023. The police asked him for explanations, and promised to draw up a protocol later / Photo courtesy of Igor Kornilayev



A passer-by hugs Anton Malykhin during a picket in the center of Moscow, August 20, 2023. The man was charged with violating the rules for participating in the rally and discrediting the Russian army. The detainee was represented by a lawyer from OVD-Info Alan Kachmazov / Photo: Ivanka Rudovskaya



Alexey, a resident of Perm, in a single picket on August 21, 2023. Police drew up a protocol against him/ Photo: Perm 36.6 AGAINST WAR

## REPRESSIONS AT THE LEGISLATIVE LEVEL



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Due to the summer recess in the State Duma, Russian legislators managed to refrain from passing any repressive laws from July 24 to August 24.

## CRIMINAL CASES

# 663

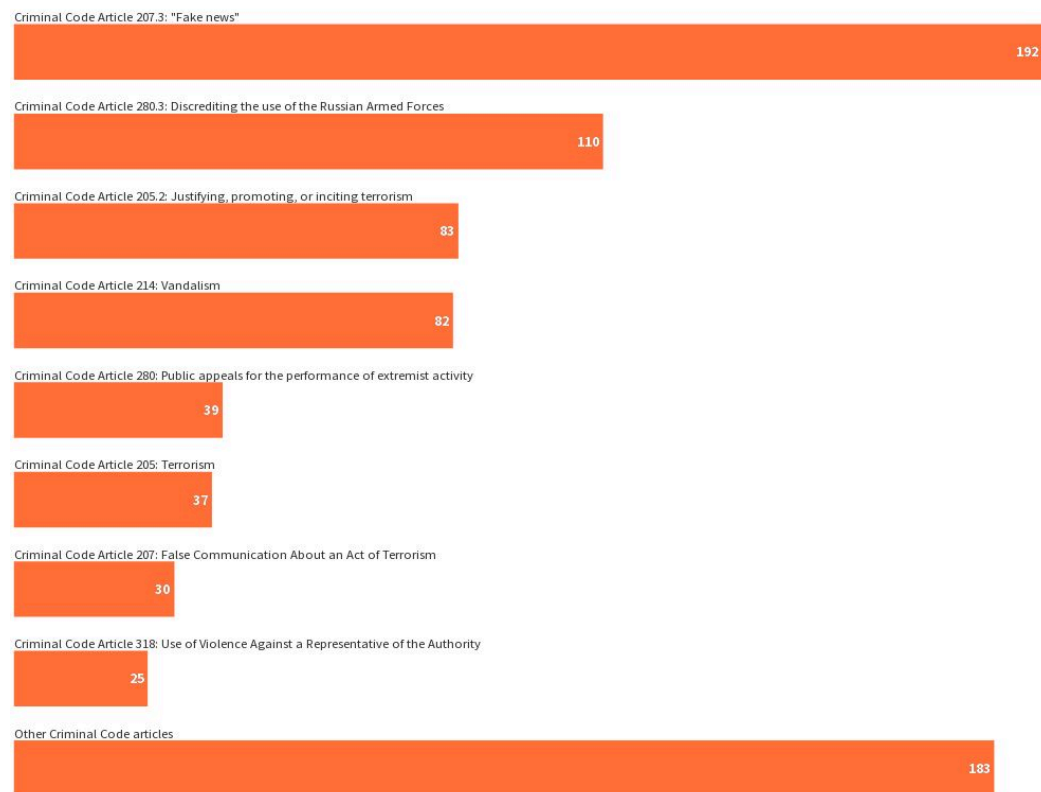
**defendants in criminal lawsuits against anti-war activity since 24 February 2022**

During this month, we became aware of 28 new defendants in anti-war criminal cases, 20 of whom received sentences.



## 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



Данные [ОВД-Инфо](#) • На 23 августа 2023

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A case was **initiated** against a 16-year-old student from the village of Sosva (Sverdlovsk region) due to his posts calling for the arson of military recruiting offices, considered a public call for terrorism (part 2 of Article 205.2 of the Criminal Code). Sociologist Boris Kagarlitsky was **taken** into custody due to publications related to the explosion on the Crimean Bridge. A resident of a restricted-access town and her underage children were summoned for questioning in a case related to discrediting the army — the children are being **questioned** as witnesses in the case.

The Soviet City Court of the Kaliningrad Region **declined** to release Igor Baryshnikov, who was convicted for spreading «fake news» about the military, for his mother’s funeral. Baryshnikov and his defense had requested that he be escorted under guard to attend his mother’s funeral,

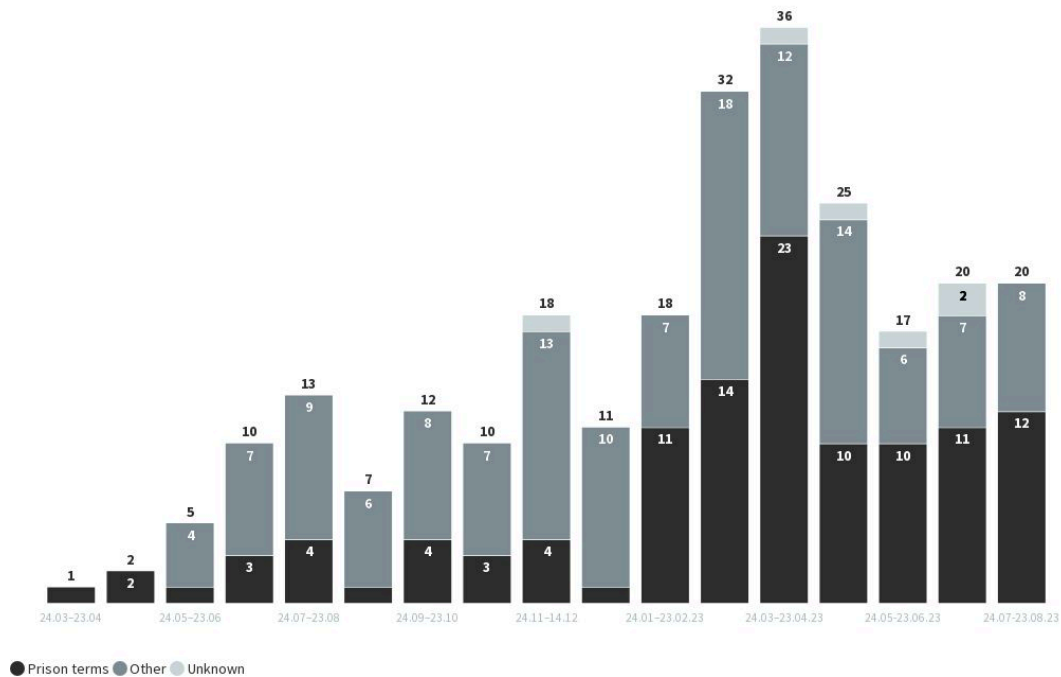
as she **passed away** on the 7th of August at the age of 96. Baryshnikov himself was **sentenced** on July 22 to seven and a half years in prison under the article related to disseminating false information about the Russian army, motivated by political hatred (part «d» of Article 207.3 of the Criminal Code).

The underage high school student Yegor Balazeykin, accused in the case of arson against the military recruiting office, is **experiencing** progressing liver fibrosis.

During the hearing on the extension of custody for the defendants in the case against the «Vesna» movement, bailiffs **used** force against the wife of one of the defendants, Yevgeniy Zateyev. Later, an administrative protocol was drawn up against her.

Andrey Balin, a former member of PARNAS (People's Freedom Party, a liberal-democratic political party, one of the first opposition parties created in the final years of the Soviet Union), who was convicted due to anti-war posts, was threatened with a shank by a fellow inmate. He instigated the threat by **speaking** negatively about Vladimir Putin.

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



Данные ОВД-Инфо • На 23.08.2023  
 К реальным срокам мы относим: лишение свободы в колонии-поселении; лишение свободы в колонии общего режима (в том числе заочно); лишение свободы в колонии строгого режима; принудительное лечение. К другим видам наказания относятся: штраф; ограничение свободы; лишение свободы условно; принудительные работы; исправительные работы, в том числе условно; обязательные работы.

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This month, 75-year-old Zainulla Gadzhieva was fined 100,000 rubles (approximately \$1059) for an anti-war comment under a criminal case for discrediting the army (Part 1 of Article 280.3 of the Criminal Code). Alexander Bakhtin, an eco-activist from Mytishchi, was **sentenced** to six years in prison for the case for spreading «fake news» about the military. A 67-year-old resident of Novosibirsk, Takhir Arslanov, was **sentenced** to three years in prison for three charges stemming from two anti-war comments. More details about the verdicts for the defendants of anti-war cases can be found with the following [link](#).

Since then, 45 of our lawyers provided assistance to 61 defendants in 47 criminal cases related to anti-war charges across 35 cities during this month. Additionally, our defense counsels participated in one search (in Moscow) and seven interrogations (in Moscow, Saint Petersburg, Kazan, Mytishchi, Saratov, and Dzhankoi). An attorney cooperating



with us is representing Anatoly Arseev, a municipal deputy and a father of three children. He is being **prosecuted** under an article related to repeatedly discrediting the use of the Russian army.

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## ADMINISTRATIVE CASES

# 7683

**cases under Article 20.3.3 ("Discreditation")**

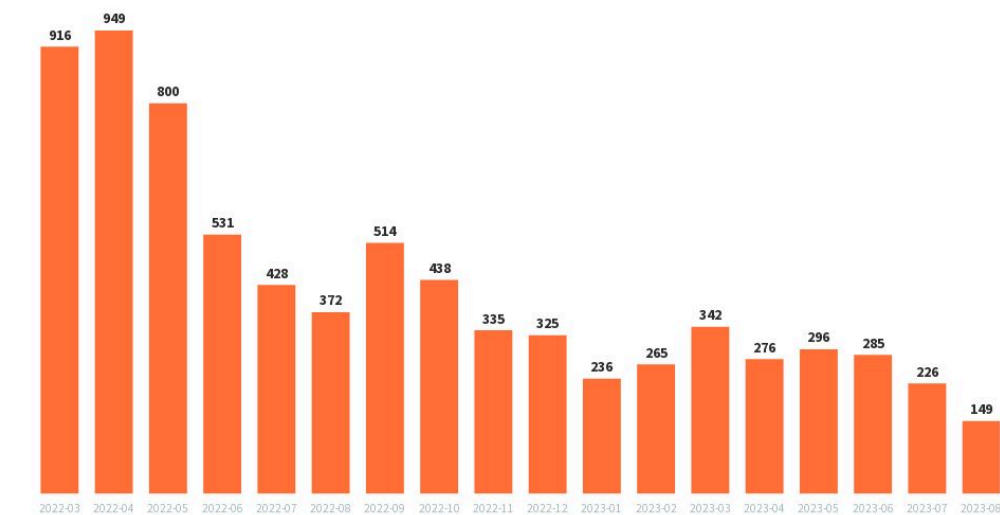
According to Mediazona as of 20.08.2023



In Crimea, a gas station employee was **fined** 45,000 rubles (approximately \$476) under the article concerning army defamation for referring to the war as a «war.» Three female animators from an aqua park in Alushta were **fined** under the same article (Part 1 of Article 20.3.3 of the Administrative Offenses Code) for dancing to a «theme song by a Ukrainian

artist with inappropriate meaning» at their workplace. The song in question is Verka Serduchka's (a drag persona of Ukrainian comedian, actor, and singer Andriy Danylko) «Hulyanochka.» In addition, the police made the young women apologize in a video for their offense, confess their love for Russia and its president, and then sing the song «Vladimir Putin is great!»

Initiation of cases under Article 20.3.3



Данные: [Madiazona](#) • Update and recalculation of all data as of 08/22/2023

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Defence attorneys from OVD-Info participated in 166 administrative cases this month and assisted 19 detainees. One of the attorneys collaborating with us defended Anna Golovina, who was arrested for participating in a protest against military mobilization at Chistye Prudy on the 24th of September, 2022. Her administrative case was **closed** due to the absence of an offense.

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## EXTRAJUDICIAL PRESSURE

## cases of extra-judicial pressure since 24 February 2022

Natalia Filonova, a retiree from Ulan-Ude who is being accused of violence against a police officer (Article 318 of the Criminal Code), has a 15-year-old adopted son. He is currently being subjected to physical abuse and **mistreatment** in the Barguzinsky Children's Home, where he was placed after Natalia was incarcerated in a pretrial detention facility.

Elena Gegia, an employee of a subsidiary of «Rosneft» (a Russian oil company) in Krasnoyarsk, was **dismissed** due to her anti-war posts on Instagram. Earlier, she was **fined** 30,000 rubles (approximately \$317) for discrediting the Russian army (Part 1 of Article 20.3.3 of the Administrative Offenses Code) through the same posts.

The contract of Pavel Kolosnitsyn, a history lecturer at Novosibirsk State University, was **not renewed** following reports about a fine under the article concerning discrediting the Russian army.

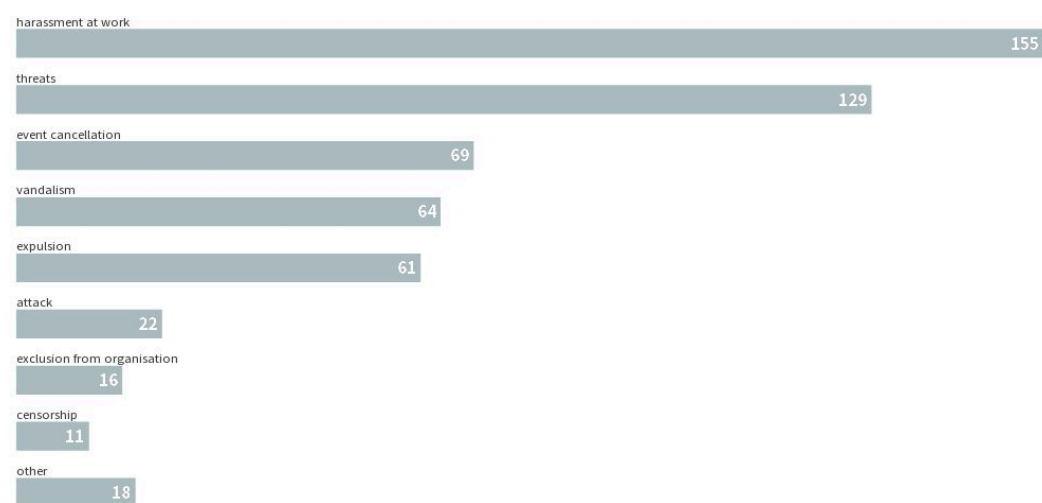
In Krasnodar, an Adyghe (people of the northwest Caucas region) activist was **beaten** by a man wearing clothing with pro-military Russian symbols due to his anti-war posts and criticism of Putin. Ekaterina Mikryukova, a doctor from Moscow, **reported** receiving threats after her message in a residential chat. She had declined to pay for a caregiver of a wounded soldier, stating that it was «his choice, he could have avoided fighting and stayed healthy.» Due to the threats and subsequent harassment, she had to quit her job and leave Russia.

The Perm Academic Theater-Theater refused to **stage** «Romeo and Juliet» due to the anti-war views of the play's



director, Joseph Raihelgauz. This month, concerts by the bands «Machete» and «Sansara» were also canceled.

Extrajudicial pressure on people with an anti-war views since 24 February 2022



На 23 августа 2023 года

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In the village of Reshetikha in the Nizhny Novgorod Region, law enforcement officers **conducted** a search at the house of local resident Alexander Gorelov. They fined him for discrediting the Russian army (Part 1 of Article 20.3.3 of the Administrative Offenses Code) and began to repaint the roof of his house, which was previously yellow and blue to represent the Ukrainian flag. In the Leningrad Region at the request of the village administration of Russko-Vysotskoye, unknown individuals **painted over** anti-war inscriptions on the store of activist Dmitry Skurikhin. The store owner had been sentenced to one and a half years in prison for discrediting the Russian army (Part 1 of Article 280.3 of the Criminal Code).

The Minister of Press and Information of Chechnya, Ahmed Dudayev, **publicly reprimanded** two local residents for their online posts about the deaths of soldiers from the «Sever-Ahmat» regiment in the war in Ukraine.

## «FOREIGN AGENTS» AND «UNDESIRABLE ORGANIZATIONS»

In this section, we used to publish information about the inclusion of «foreign agents» in the registry and the designation of organizations as «undesirable.» Currently, you can find these figures in the [Chronicle of Political Repressions](#) and the [«Inoteka»](#).

## BLOCKINGS AND CENSORSHIP

# 1003

**resources blocked by Roskomnadzor between 24 July 2023  
and 22 August 2023**

Among the blocked resources is a [project](#) by Dmitry Veliky, a supporter of Navalny from Omsk. His website [documents](#) Russian military crimes, the «Congress of Anti-War Initiatives, » and the portal Uawar which provides information and statistics about combat operations and casualties.

The social network Reddit was [fined](#) 2 million rubles (approximately \$21,188) for refusing to remove posts related to the war in Ukraine. For the same reason, [Wikipedia](#) was [fined](#) 5 million rubles (approximately \$52,971), and the [company](#) Apple was fined 400,000 rubles (approximately \$4,237) for podcasts about the war in Ukraine.

## PRESSURE ON CIVIL SOCIETY

In Dagestan, a search was [conducted](#) at the residence of human rights activist Svetlana Anokhina. A criminal case was initiated against her in April under the charge of disseminating «fake news» about the Russian army (Part 1 of Article 207.3 of the Criminal Code). During the search,

her 93-year-old mother, elder daughter, and three granddaughters were present in the house.

The Insider **reported** the poisonings of at least three Russian female journalists and activists: former special correspondent of «Novaya Gazeta» Elena Kostyuchenko, host of the YouTube channel «Zhivoy Gvoz» Irina Babloyan, and head of the «Free Russia» foundation Natalia Arno.

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



- Wartime repression reports. [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 «[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.

Photo: Yegor Zaitsev was detained for picketing and fined for «discreditation». Now he needs to collect 13,750 rubles to pay for a defense counsel. Support the crowdfunding [on platform «Zaodno»](#).

## More to read



### **The strangling of Crimea**

Denis Shedov and Dan Storyev explain how the repression in occupied Crimea was structured and how it evolved

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### **Repression in Russia in 2024: OVD-Info Overview**

For Russian civil society, the year 2024, like the previous two years, was marked by the unrelenting war waged by the Russian...

