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26.05.2023

Wartime Repressions Report. May 2023

[Русская версия](#)

Fifteen months ago, Russia initiated a full-scale war against Ukraine. Simultaneously, a new wave of repression against people within Russia has started. New reports of beatings in the police departments come to light every day. Every day, new individuals become defendants in criminal cases, persecuted for their anti-war activities. Moreover, repressions nowadays are sanctioned at the legislative level.

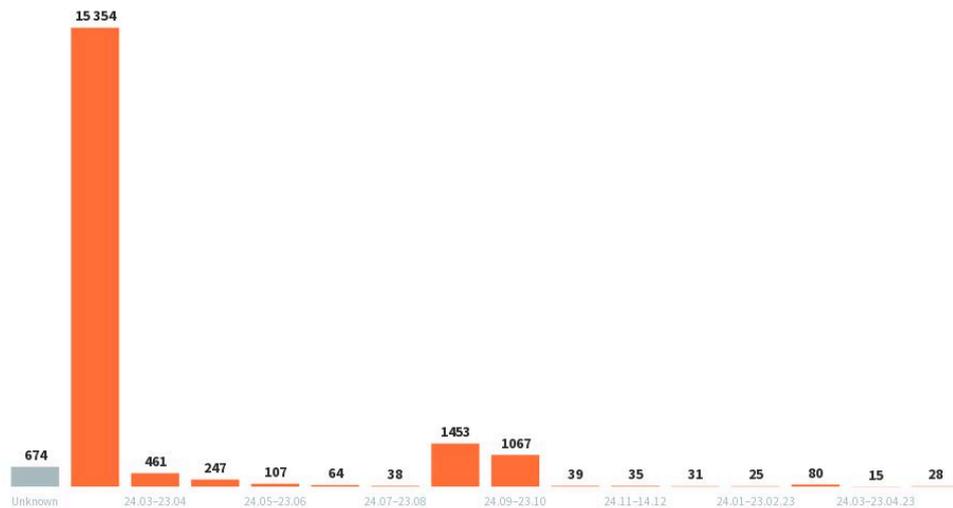
OVD-Info continues to gather and analyze data regarding political and anti-war repressions in Russia. You can support the project by following [this link](#).

RESTRICTIONS ON THE FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

19 718

detentions for anti-war stance between 24 February 2022 and 21 May 2023

Number of Detentions for Anti-War Stance by Month



Data [OVD-Info](#) • As of 21 May, 2023

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There have been detentions for anti-war stance in 243 settlements across 77 regions of Russia and in the annexed territory of Crimea. The cities with the highest number of arrests are in Moscow (9034), St. Petersburg (5456), Novosibirsk (550), Yekaterinburg (531), and Nizhny Novgorod (286).



This month, reports of new instances of violence and pressure during arrests came to light. For example, a 36-year-old Muscovite, Inna Olenich, **arrested** in October for criticizing the war in Ukraine, had her face smashed and teeth knocked out at the police department. Additionally, there have been at least three other reports of violence during arrests this month. Alexander Poskonnaya, who picketed with a Ukrainian flag, was **beaten** during the arrest and in the police van, while Vladislav Orekhovskiy, another protester, was not only beaten but also **extorted** for money. After a mass arrest at an anti-war exhibition in Taytsy, a 17-year-old girl **was brought** to a social shelter for children called «Transit» in St. Petersburg.

REPRESSIONS AT THE LEGISLATIVE LEVEL

5

new draft laws regarding “Foreign Agents” or collaboration with foreign organizations this month

Laws stipulating that any cooperation with foreign NGOs is only possible after entering information about their structural units on the Russian territory into a special register and initiating control over their activities are currently under consideration. If there is no such information in the register, administrative or criminal liability will be imposed for cooperation with an NGO or organizing its activities.

Furthermore, once again, the authorities are proposing to tighten the legislation on «foreign agents.» The introduced draft laws, for example, require third parties to take into account the restrictions imposed on foreign agents and not to contribute to violations of the «foreign agent» legislation.

In addition, the draft laws grant the Ministry of Justice the authority to exercise state control over compliance with the legislation on «foreign agents.» Previously, such power was limited to only controlling the activities of the «foreign agents» themselves. The Ministry of Justice will now have more grounds to conduct inspections and impose fines, as there will be more opportunities to draw up protocols.

The Ministry will also issue instructions requiring compliance with the legislation on foreign agents, both to the foreign agents themselves and to «third parties.»

This month, lawmakers have also managed to adopt **amendments** to the election law. Now, it is prohibited to conduct election campaigns via internet resources restricted by Roskomnadzor (Federal Service for Supervision of Communications, Information Technology, and Mass Media). Additionally, several simplifications have been

introduced in connection with e-voting. For example, the minimum number of paper ballots to be provided to each polling station will be determined by the decision of the organizing Election Commission, whereas previously, it was not less than 70%.

Overall, since the start of the full-scale war, lawmakers managed to submit for consideration at least 44 repressive laws.

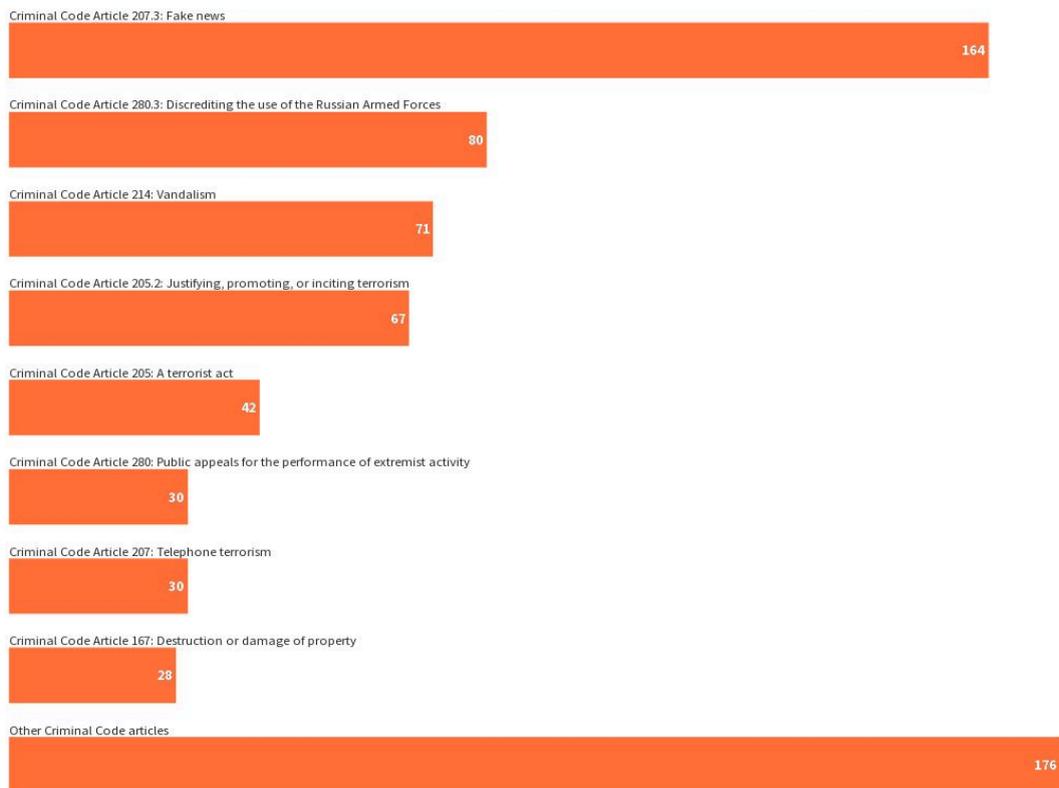
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	Закон	Ссылк
1	О внесении изменений в Федеральный закон "Об образовании в Российск...	https://
2	О внесении изменений в Кодекс Российской Федерации об администрати...	https://
3	О внесении изменения в статью 205-6 Уголовного кодекса Российской Фе...	https://
4	On Amendments to Article 6.21 of the Code of the Russian Federation on Admi...	https://
5	On Amendments to Article 458 of the Criminal Procedure Code of the Russian ...	https://
6	On Amendments to the Federal Law "On Communications" and Certain Legisla...	https://
7	On Amendments to the Federal Law "On Combating the Legalization (Launderi...	https://
8	On Amendments to Certain Legislative Acts of the Russian Federation (as rega...	https://
9	On Amendments to Article 12 of the Federal Law 'On Combating Extremist Act...	https://
10	On Amendments to Article 26 of the Federal Law 'On Banks and Banking Activi...	https://
11	On Amendments to the Federal Law 'On Librarianship' (in terms of the establis...	https://
12	On Amendments to Article 354.1 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federati...	https://
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CRIMINAL CASES

584

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

The number of defendants in the «Anti-war Case» prosecuted under each of the articles
Since 24 February 2022



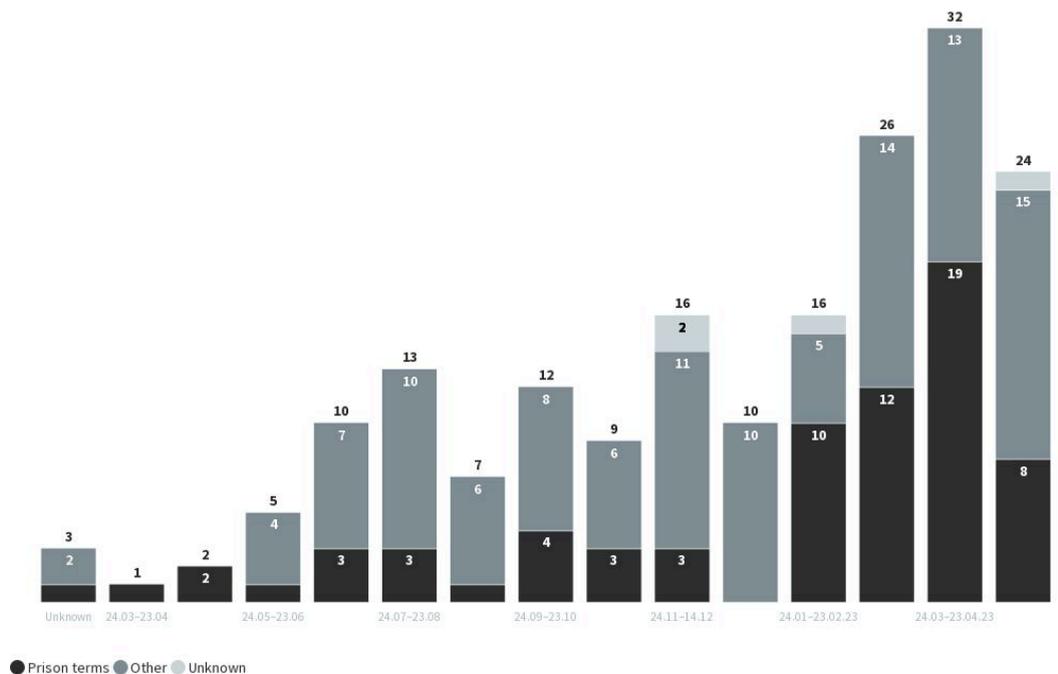
Data [OVD-Info](#) • 23 May 2023

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This month, reports of 46 new individuals involved in the «Anti-War Case» came to light. During this time, in at least two cases, the detainees in the «anti-war case» were not provided with proper medical assistance while in custody. One such case involved **Natalya Filonova** from Ulan-Ude, and **Felix Eliseev** from Moscow, who was prosecuted under the article on justifying terrorism. Additionally, a court in Kaliningrad **refused** to send to a medical examination Igor Baryshnikov, a 64-year-old activist accused in a case related

to military «fakes.» He has experienced an exacerbation of a chronic illness, and there were suspicions of cancer. His lawyer requested an examination to determine whether Baryshnikov, in such a condition, can be held in custody, as the **prosecution** has asked for an 8-year imprisonment sentence for him.

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



Data OVD-Info • 23 May 2023
 We refer to "real terms" as: deprivation of liberty in a colony-settlement; imprisonment in a colony of general regime (including in absentia); imprisonment in a strict regime colony; forced treatment. This also includes sentencing to an actual imprisonment, which we were told about without details about the colony. Other types of punishment include: a fine; restriction of freedom; conditional imprisonment; forced labor; correctional labor, including probation; compulsory work.

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The detainees are restricted from making contact with the outside world. For example, the management of Detention Center No. 1 in Tyumen **refuses to deliver** books sent by a support group to the detainees in the case of the Ural antifascists Yuri Neznamov, Danila Chertykov, and Denis Aydin. Egor Balazeykin, a high school student from St. Petersburg, who is held in pretrial detention as a suspect in an arson attack on the military enlistment office after the first week of his detention, stopped getting his letters delivered from anyone except his parents. Letters are also not being delivered to Dmitry Ivanov, the author

of an oppositional Telegram channel «Protestny MGU,» and Maria Ponomarenko, a journalist from RusNews.

This month, multiple reports of violence against detainees in criminal cases have resurfaced. For example, it was revealed that on April 26th, after the arrest of **Stanislav Velichko**, he was beaten and threatened with legal charges against his wife. An acquaintance of Natalya Filonova **shared** that during Filonova's arrest, law enforcement officers used force, and the forensic examination confirmed bruises on the arms of the retiree. Alexey Moskalev, who was discovered in a pretrial detention center in Smolensk, **described** the violence by Belarusian security forces during his arrest in Minsk: he was severely beaten, including having his head slammed against a wall. Due to handcuffs, Alexey still hasn't regained the nerve function in his hands: he is still unable to feel his thumbs. An influencer Askhabali Alibekov, who was convicted for repeated defamation of the army, **revealed** that he was beaten at the investigative detention center. In total, at least 36 individuals involved in the «anti-war case» have been subjected to violence by law enforcement officers.

This month, there has been a lot of news related to persecution for refusing to go fight in Ukraine. For instance, a private from St. Petersburg tried to resign from service for almost a year after the start of the war. As a result, he was **sentenced** to seven years in prison. In addition, two members of the military from Kamchatka in the Russian Far East **received** prison sentences for refusing to fight. A soldier Konstantin Trifonov, who declined to go on a business trip to participate in military operations, received a 25-day **administrative arrest**. Additionally, Konstantin Pavlov, a deputy of the Bryansk Regional Duma, **was sent** to a pretrial detention center for his previous assistance to 40 conscripts in avoiding deployment to the war. He is being accused of fraud (Part 4 of Article 159 of the Criminal Code).

There has also been some good news — Artem Lebedev, a student from Nizhny Novgorod who was previously suspected of arson at the military enlistment office, **won a lawsuit** against the state and was awarded a compensation of 100,000 rubles (US\$1252) for unjust persecution. The criminal case against him was dropped due to lack of evidence.

This month OVD-Info defenders assisted 62 individuals involved in 53 criminal cases related to anti-war activities across 33 cities. Furthermore, lawyers helped defendants during one search operation and ten interrogations.

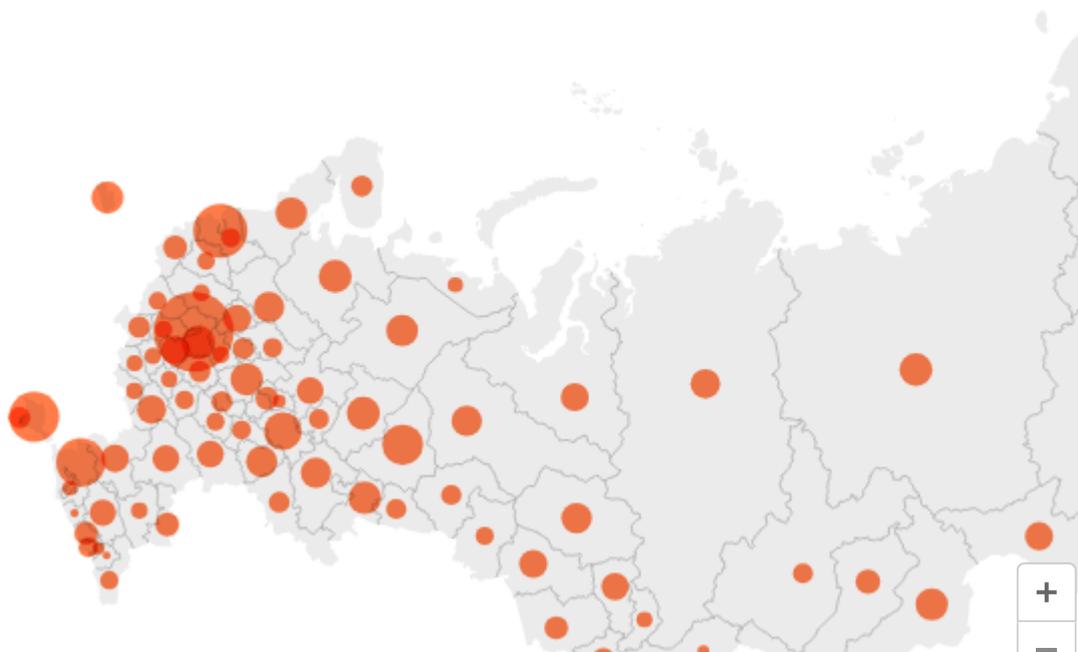
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ADMINISTRATIVE CASES

6839

cases under Article 20.3.3 (“Discreditation”)

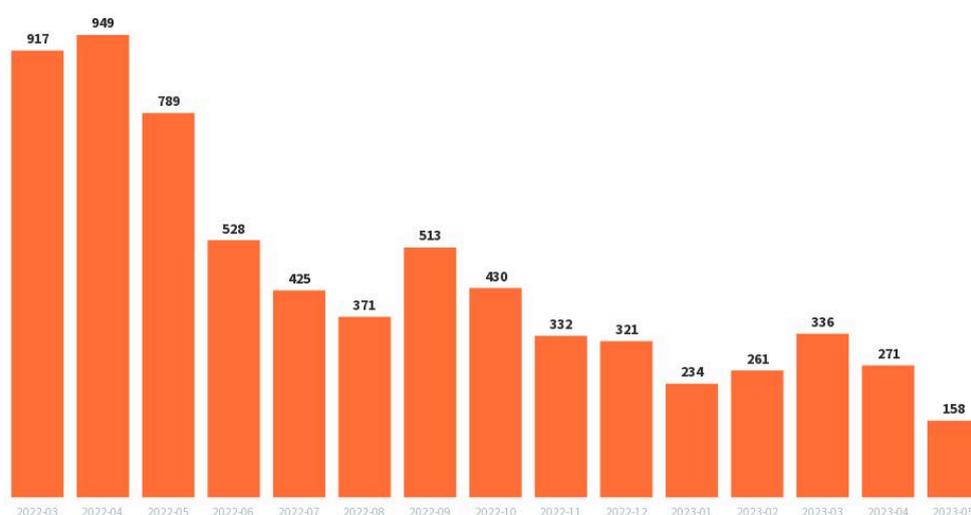
According to Mediazona



The diverse set of actions, even only distantly related to Ukraine and the Russian invasion, can lead to an accusation of defamation of the armed forces. For instance, Olga Lakhman, a teacher in a technical school, **was fined** 30,000 rubles (US\$375) for printing information about Russia’s invasion of Ukraine from Wikipedia. Anastasia Chernysheva, a confectioner in Moscow, was fined 35,000 rubles (US\$440) for **cakes** with anti-war inscriptions.

Initiation of cases under Article 20.3.3

While updating the data for a new report, we found a calculation error in this graph, now (1 August 2023) we have corrected it. We apologize for any possible inconvenience!



Data: [Mediazona](#) • Update and recalculation of all data as of May 19, 2023

This month, defenders from OVD-Info participated in 56 administrative cases in courts and assisted 21 detainees. For example, they provided assistance to those **detained** at an anti-war exhibition in the Leningrad region. Additionally, **artist** Katrin Nenashova was detained in anticipation of May 9th in the same region.

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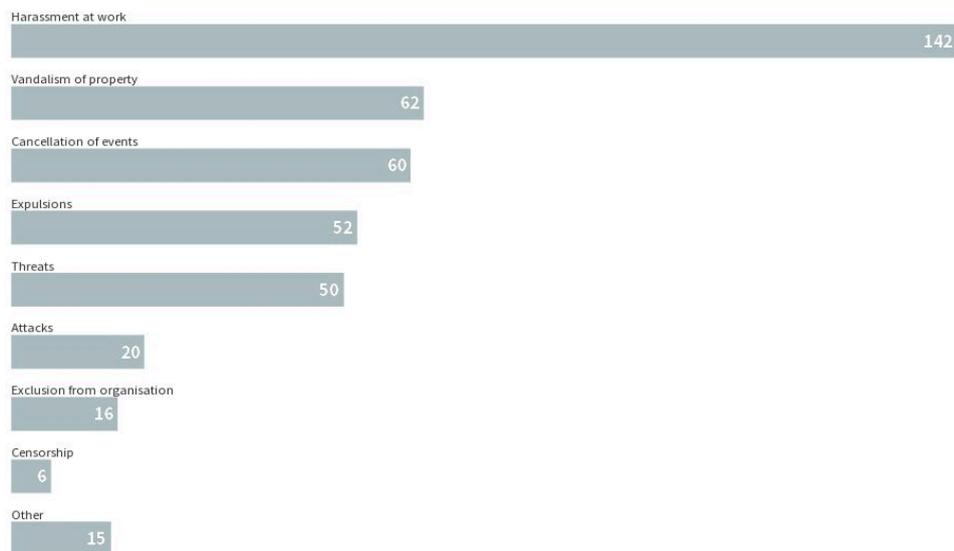
EXTRAJUDICIAL PRESSURE

423

cases of extra-judicial pressure since 24 February 2022

This month, reports of 20 new cases came to light. One of them involved a Ukrainian woman living in Sochi. She was arrested twice for her posts in support of her home country. Later, a Telegram channel associated with the authorities released a video of her «apologies.» Instances of forcing individuals to apologize for anti-war statements are quite common, and we are aware of eight more cases that occurred within the last month.

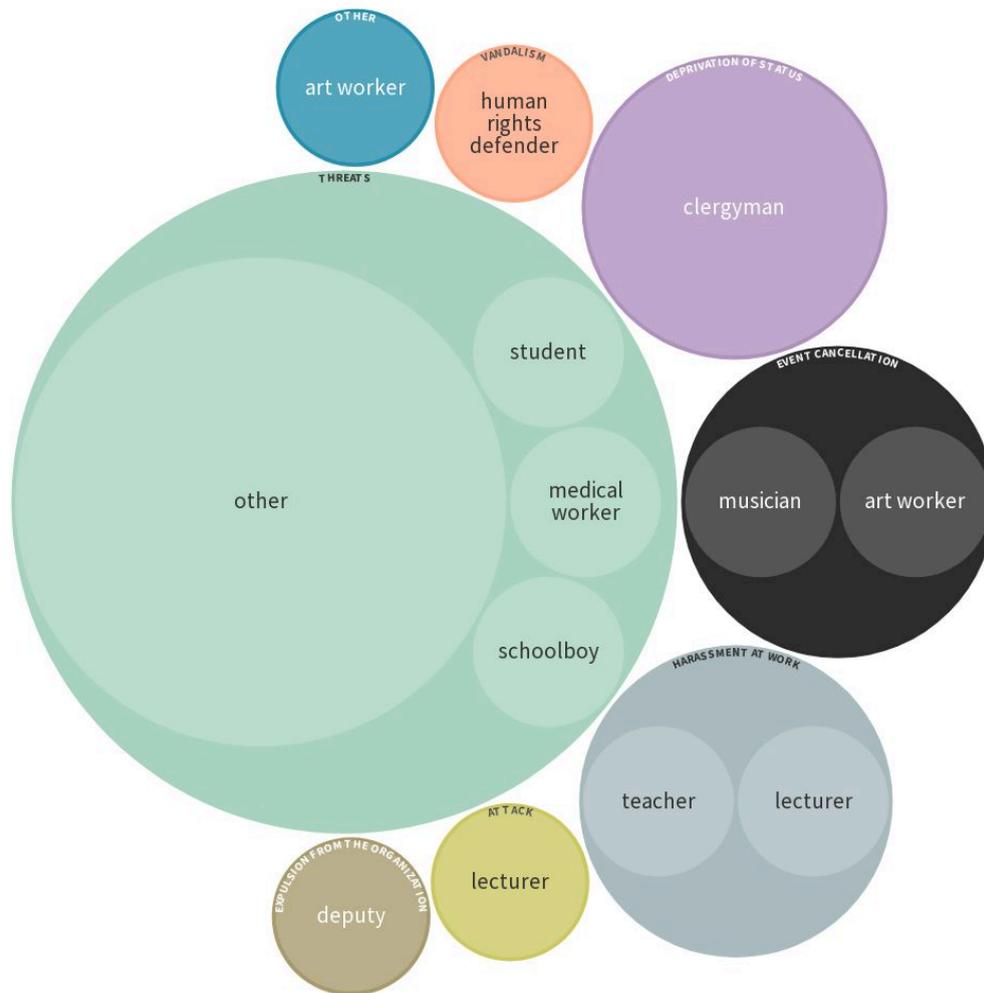
Extrajudicial pressure on people with an anti-war position since 24 February 2022



As of 23 May 2023

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Security forces also employ the tactic of pressuring relatives of anti-war activists. This month, there have been at least nine such cases. For instance, security forces demanded that Andrey Semkin, who organized the anti-war exhibition, come to the police station after they **detained** Semkin's mother. In Sevastopol, the mother of a teenager was **forced** to apologize because of a video he had posted. Relatives of anti-war activist Anastasia Nazaruk **had visits** from police officers no less than five times, at home and in the workplace. At least two clergymen were stripped of their ranks this month for their anti-war statements — **Protodeacon** Andrey Kurayev and **Priest** Ioann Kovalev.



Data: [OVD-Info](#) • As of 23 May 2023

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The suppression of anti-war stances in education remains as strong as ever. After a prosecutor's inspection, three protocols were **drawn up** against a college in Novosibirsk for not conducting «Discussions of Importance,» mandatory extracurricular propagandist lessons introduced this year in all schools and colleges throughout Russia. In a different instance of suppression, an inspection was initiated following a report by a local resident claiming that students were «promulgating Russia's defeat in the Special Military Operation (propagandist euphemism for Russia's war of aggression in Ukraine).» The school principal **snitched** to the police on a school girl for wearing yellow-blue Afro

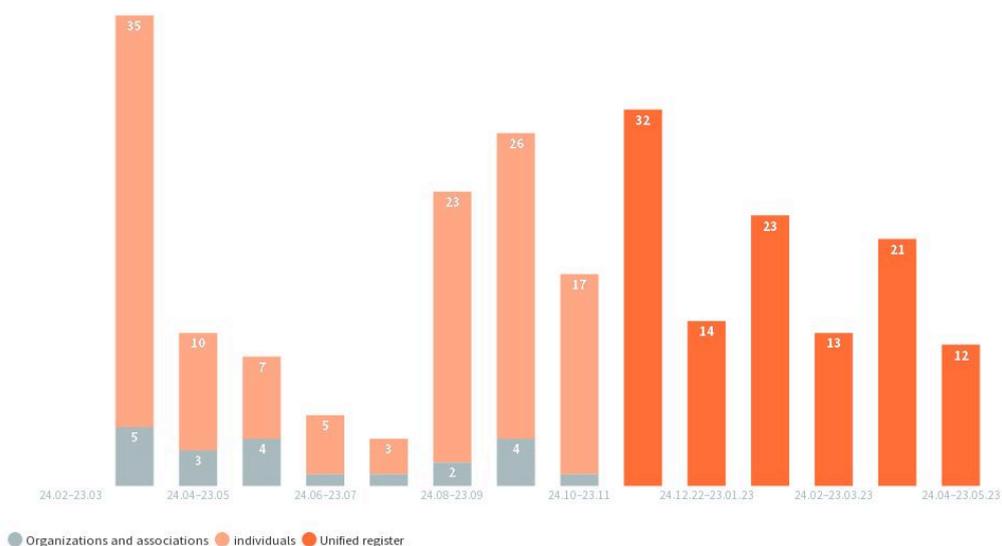
braids and a «Yin-Yang» symbol to her classes. As a result, an investigation has been launched against the person who made the braids. **Literature teacher** Vasily Razumov from a gymnasium in Yaroslavl and **professor** Natalya Podolyak from a university in Krasnoyarsk were dismissed due to their anti-war posts. Finally, the court **dismissed** the lawsuit filed by 18-year-old activist Vadim Burlakov from Belgorod against a college lecturer who called him a «fool» and a «traitor» for his anti-war picket.

«FOREIGN AGENTS» AND «UNDESIRABLE ORGANIZATIONS»

12

“Foreign Agents” added to the register by the Ministry of Justice between 24 April and 23 May 2023

262 individuals, organizations and associations were recognized as “Foreign Agents” in 15 months



Data: [Inoteka](#) • 23 May 2023

In May, at least eight people were issued protocols for lack of proper «Foreign Agent» labeling. These individuals include [Alexandra Nevzorova](#), [Tatiana Lazareva](#), sociologist [Viktor Vakhtayn](#), [Marina Pisklakova-Parker](#), the head of the «ANNA» Resource Center, [influencer](#) Mikhail Svetov, musicians [Monetochka](#), [Noize MC](#), and [Morgenshtern](#).

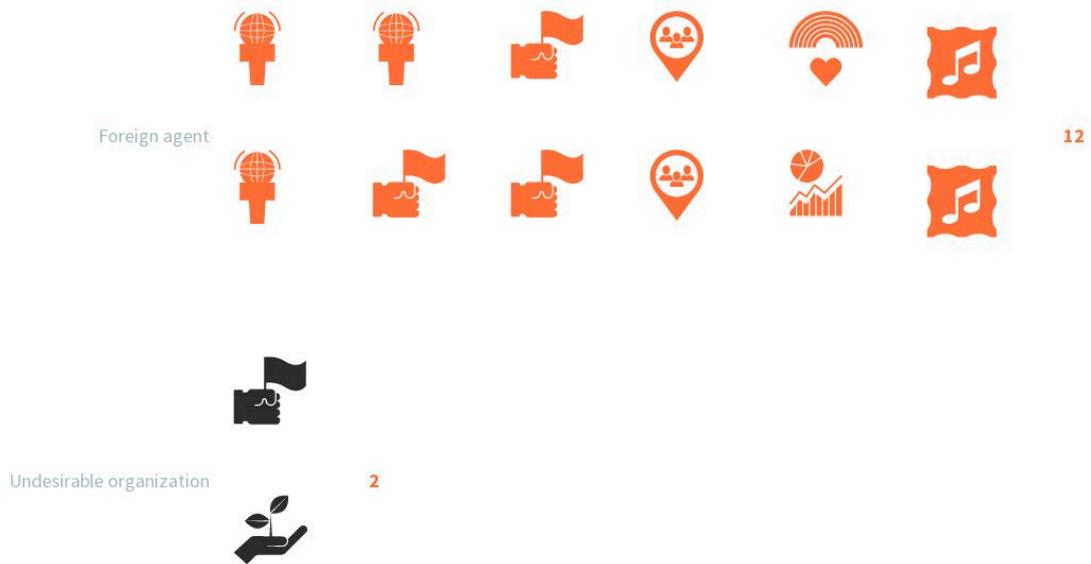
Additionally, a protocol [was drawn up](#) against Elena Bobrovskaya, the director of the NGO, considered a foreign agent called «Interra» under the article regarding participation in the activities of «undesirable organizations» (Article 20.33 of the Administrative Offenses Code). The reason for the persecution was a two-year-old post on the organization's website, allegedly mentioning a partner's name that was later declared an «undesirable organization.»

2

organizations recognized as “undesirable” by the authorities between 24 April and 23 May 2023

The status of «undesirability» was assigned to the assembly of former Russian deputies called the «Congress of People's Deputies» and the international non-profit organization «Greenpeace International,» which is involved in environmental protection worldwide.

New foreign agents and undesirable organizations this month



Data: [Inoteka](#) • As of 23 May 2023

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The Ministry of Justice **reported** that in 2022, the amount of fines imposed on «foreign agents» amounted to 228.6 million rubles (2.9 million USD), which is 60 times higher than in 2021.

BLOCKING AND CENSORSHIP

394

resources blocked by the “Roskomnadzor” between 24 April and 23 May 2023

According to Roskomsvoboda

In addition, this month, the websites of human rights organizations «**Conscientious Objectors Movement**» and **Human Rights Without Frontiers**, the **website** of the

journalist project «Novaya Gazeta,» the **website** of opposition politician Nikolay Bondarenko, and even the **website** of the German television channel OstWest were blocked.

The Wikimedia Foundation (the organization supporting Wikipedia) has been once again **fined** two million rubles (US\$25 000) for not removing information about the war.

PRESSURE ON CIVIL SOCIETY

The Ministry of Justice **won** the case in the Moscow City Court to eliminate the Information and Analytical Center «Sova».

Unknown individuals **covered** the building from which the Moscow authorities evicted the Sakharov Center with stickers bearing the letter Z.

Chairman of the Perm's «Center for Historical Memory» Alexander Chernyshov was **prevented** from boarding a flight at Sheremetyevo Airport and was detained for 15 days for petty hooliganism (Article 20.1 of the Administrative Code). Later, a criminal case was **initiated** against him and the former head of Perm's «Memorial» for an attempt to smuggle important cultural artifacts. Alexander remained in custody as a preventive measure. On May 19th, searches related to this case were **conducted** at the premises of at least three human rights activists and members of Perm's «Memorial,» two **board** members of the Perm «Center for Historical Memory,» lawyers who collaborated with human rights activists, as well as journalist Tatiana Cherepanova.

Human rights activist and former Memorial Human Rights Center employee, Bahrom Khamroev has been **sentenced** to 14 years in prison. He was found guilty of two terrorism charges based on his Facebook posts and appeals to the European Court of Human Rights regarding the individuals involved in the «**Hizb ut-Tahrir**» cases.

Searches were conducted at the residences of opposition politicians and the editor-in-chief of the St. Petersburg publication «Ladoga» in Moscow and St. Petersburg. The security forces claim that these individuals are allegedly associated with opposition figure Ilya Ponomarev and that they participated in the sessions of the **«Congress of People's Deputies.»**

LINKS TO OTHER OVD-INFO DATA AND REPORTS

- Summary of anti-war repressions. [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.

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