



Illustration: Michael Scarn for OVD-Info

15.03.2024, 13:23 **Вся Россия**

ДОКУМЕНТЫ

Detentions at public protests, 2012-2024

Русская версия

The OVD-Info project began collecting data on detentions in its very first year of operation. We believe that the data we have collected will help understand the structure of civil rights violations within the system, and serve as a foundation for future research in this area.

The dataset includes information on detentions in Moscow starting from 2012 and in Saint-Petersburg from 2013. Information on other regions and annexed Crimea has been available since 2020. Data of 2021 is still preliminary and is currently undergoing verifications and checks (for more details, see [here](#)).

It's important to note that the dataset and its visual representations reflect the number of detentions rather than the number of individuals detained. This distinction is used because the same individual can be detained at different protests within a few days.

Here, we showcase methods and approaches for utilising the dataset. For this purpose, OVD-Info analysts have created plots with detailed information on detentions at public protests. From these, we have gathered certain insights on the state of assembly freedom in Russia from 2020 to 2024. This serves as an example of the potential applications of this dataset. You are encouraged to analyse this data and create your own visualisations.

In the [methodology](#) we detail our process for counting detentions and clarify various terms used in the dataset and accompanying plots.

The dataset is available [here](#).

If you have an inquiry about the data or would like to explore a joint project with us, contact us via:

data@ovdinfo.org

You can subscribe to [updates](#) for researchers and experts. In this newsletter, we inform you about new reports, data and datasets.

We also have a [Telegram channel](#) where we share newly acquired data.

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

VISUALISATION INCLUDES 4 METRICS

Number of detentions refers to the count of an individual's detentions at a specific protest. It's possible for the same person to be detained multiple times within the same day at a single event or rally; in such cases, each detention is recorded.

Number of events with detentions indicates the quantity of events during which at least one person was detained. It's crucial to note that we do not have data on the total number of rallies where no detentions occurred. Therefore, this metric should not be used as a direct indicator of overall protest activity.

Number of detentions per event is the ratio of the total number of detentions to the total number of events, essentially representing the average number of detainees at each public event.

Number of detentions per 100 thousand people measures how the number of detentions relates to the population size of a region in 2021. This figure is calculated separately for each region.

To get detailed information on an event (e.g. its format, cause and whether it was officially approved), you may use filters in plots. More about them is at the bottom of the page.

During the last five years, more than 40,000 detentions took place at public rallies and events.

From 2020 to 2023, law enforcement officers across Russia conducted **40,595 detentions** at public events such as pickets, rallies, processions, and other gatherings.

In Moscow, there were 36,460 arrests at rallies over 12 years, from 2012 to 2024. In St. Petersburg, there were 12,873 arrests at rallies over 11 years, from 2013 to 2024.

From 2020 to 2024, most detentions took place because of political protest.

We define political protest as a rally, an event or a single picket where people demand certain system changes from the government and pursue socially important goals — for example, protests against war, high-level corruption, pension reform or changes in the Constitution. During 2020-2024 most of the detentions at rallies happened during these kinds of events.

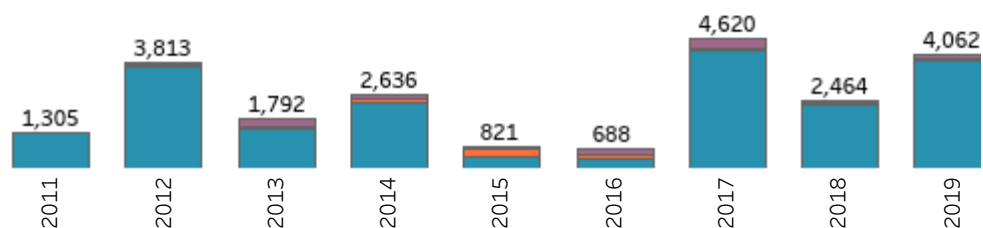
This chart shows the dynamics in number of detentions, number of events, and an average number of detentions per event in different years.

Select metric

Number of detentions

Select color detail

Subject type

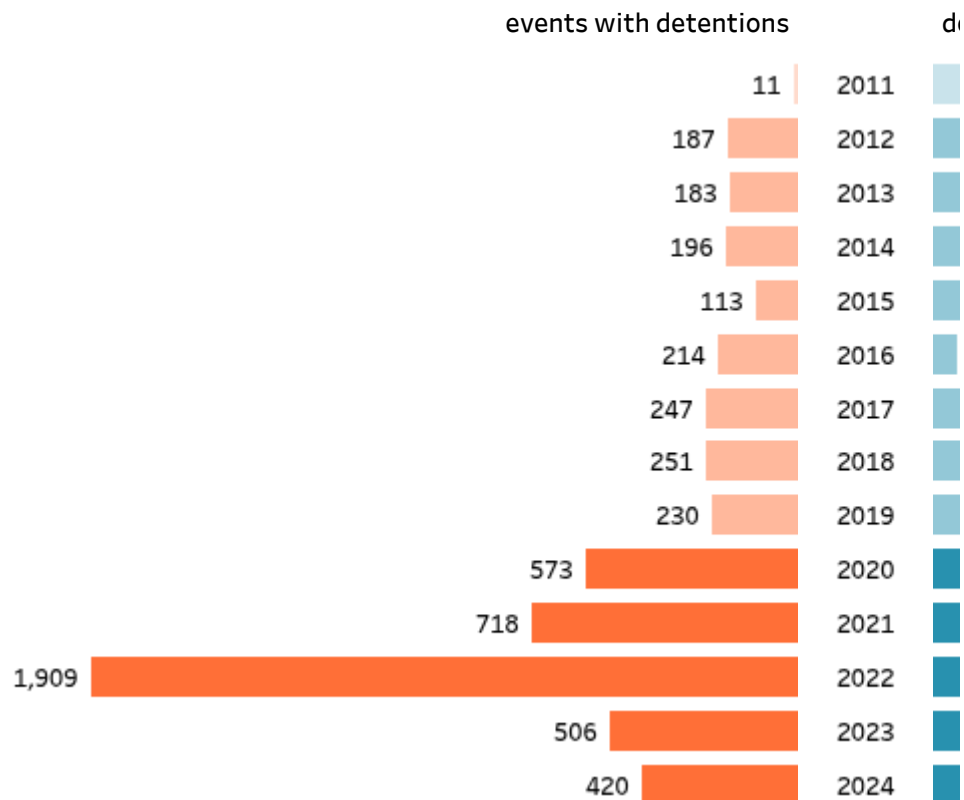


December 2011 — start of data collection in Moscow

2013 — start of data collection in St. Petersburg

2020 — start of data collection in a number of regions of Russia

The biggest number of detentions at public events occurred in 2022.



December 2011 — start of data collection in Moscow
 2013 — start of data collection in St. Petersburg
 2020 — start of data collection in a number of regions of Russia

This graph shows the overall dynamics in the number of events and the number of detentions by year. From 2020 to 2024, the most detentions occurred in 2022, when the full-scale war in Ukraine began.

In 2024, the most frequent detentions were due to rallies in support of political prisoners and for expressing protest during elections

In first place in terms of the number of detentions in 2024 are actions in support of political prisoners, in connection with the funerals and memorial actions after the murder of A. Navalny. The second in terms of the number of detentions are actions for

expressing protest during the presidential elections in the Russian Federation.

The undisputed leader in the number of detentions in 2022 was the detentions at anti-war protests after the start of Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine. In 2024, another topic emerged — protests by the wives of those mobilized demanding that their relatives be returned home from the front. These protests did not express a clear anti-war position demanding an end to the war, so these protests are shown separately from the anti-war ones.

Select metric

Number of detentions

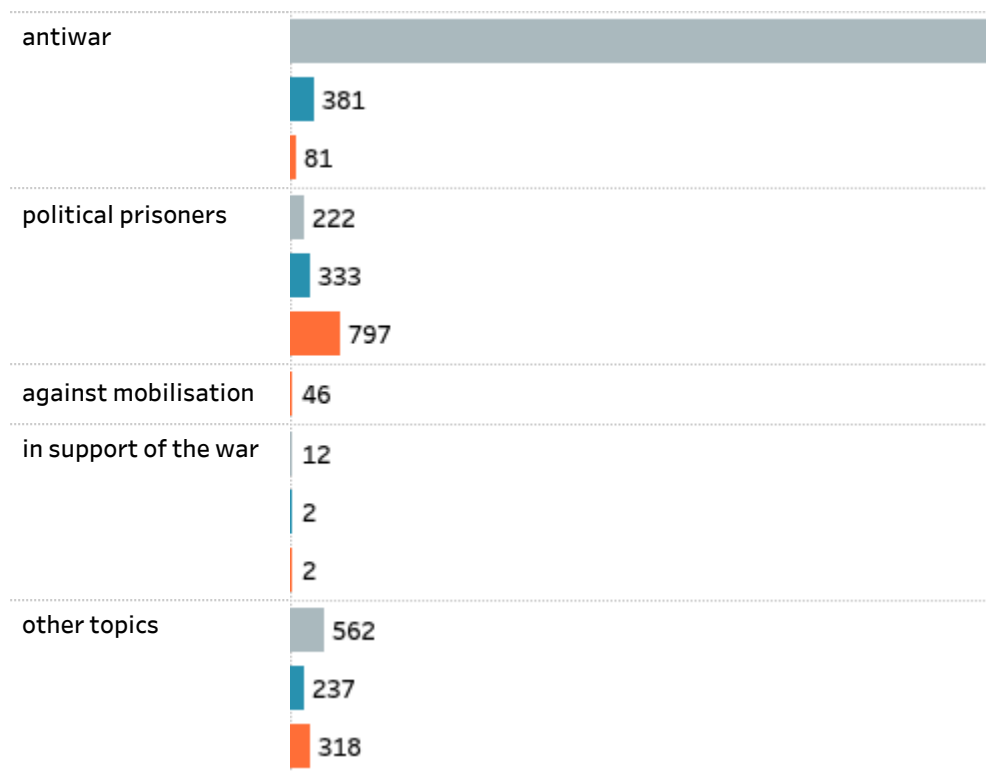
Select column group

Year

	Итого	2019	2020	
antiwar	20,109	2		
political prisoners	16,913	758	531	
election	3,582	2,834	14	
against the government	1,327	112	795	
other	719	120	243	
ecology	404	21	220	
urban planning	242	25	138	
freedom of speech	205	33	55	
foreign policy	185	24	100	
gender rights	171	70	31	
nationalist agenda	152	1	77	
freedom of assembly	118	9	100	
housing	81	12	44	
healthcare	75		26	
specific economic requirements	70	17	26	
corruption	59	5	23	
against torture	54	1	41	
antifa	51	18	12	
against mobilisation	46			
labor rights	46			
education	27		7	
in support of the war	16			
labour rights	3		3	
migration legislation	2			
Grand Total	44,657	4,062	2,486	

Select metric

Number of detentions ▼



Since 2020, people have been regularly detained because of solitary protest. By law there is no requirement to have them pre-approved by authorities.

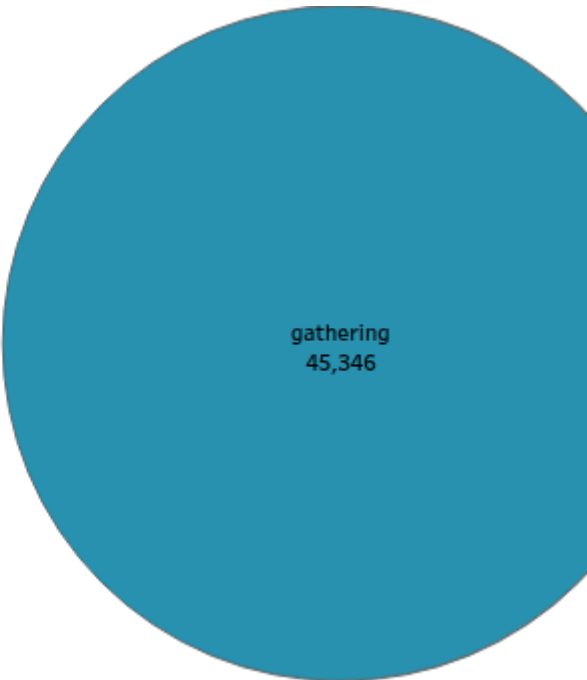
In 2020, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, authorities imposed restrictions which included the **prohibition** of rallies, marches, and other mass gatherings. In turn, individuals began to engage in solitary protests and other forms of individual action that do not require authorization from the authorities. Despite the non-violent and compliant nature of these actions, detentions continued to occur. As a result, while the total number of actions involving detentions saw a significant increase, the overall number of detainees experienced a decrease.

From that moment until the end of 2024, a solitary protest has been the form of protest that most often became a reason for detention.

The graph below shows how the number of detentions and events with detentions has changed depending on their format: a gathering, a solitary protest, in motion (e.g. march), and others. To see this, you need to click on any circle, and then the dynamics of the selected metric and event format by year will appear.

Select metric

Number of detentions ▼



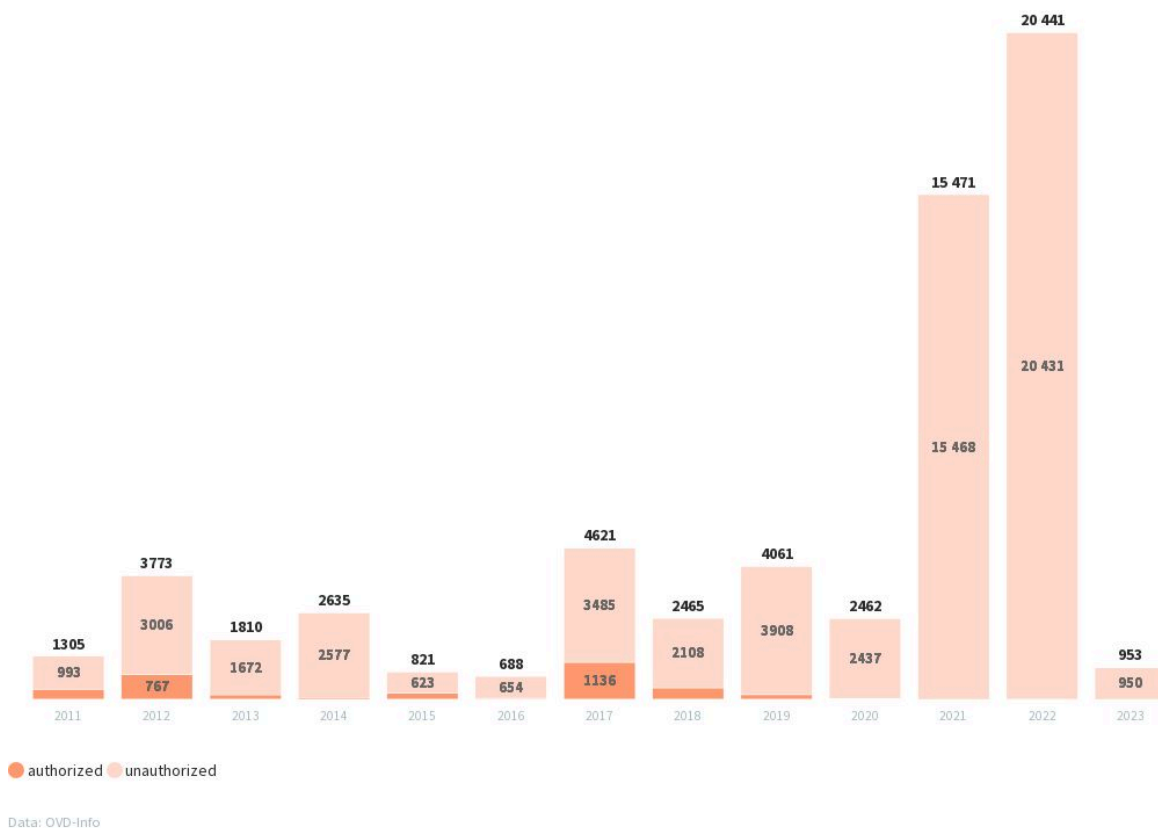
December 2011 — start of data collection in Moscow
2013 — start of data collection in St. Petersburg
2020 — start of data collection in a number of regions of Russia

It can also be seen that detentions in 2021 frequently happened before or after events. In 2022, there were fewer such detentions, while the total number of detentions increased.

Most of the events, where detentions took place, were refused by authorities for approval.

For instance, irrespective of the region, underlying cause, level of demand, and organisers, the majority of events between 2020 and 2023 where detentions occurred were not sanctioned by authorities. This lack of approval provided authorities with a pretext to label these events as «illegal.» For a more detailed analysis, refer to the «[Dynamics](#)» graph, utilising the filters for «Detentions» and «agreement»

Number of detentions at rallies that authorities refused to approve



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Rating of detentions in the regions, not only Moscow and St. Petersburg.

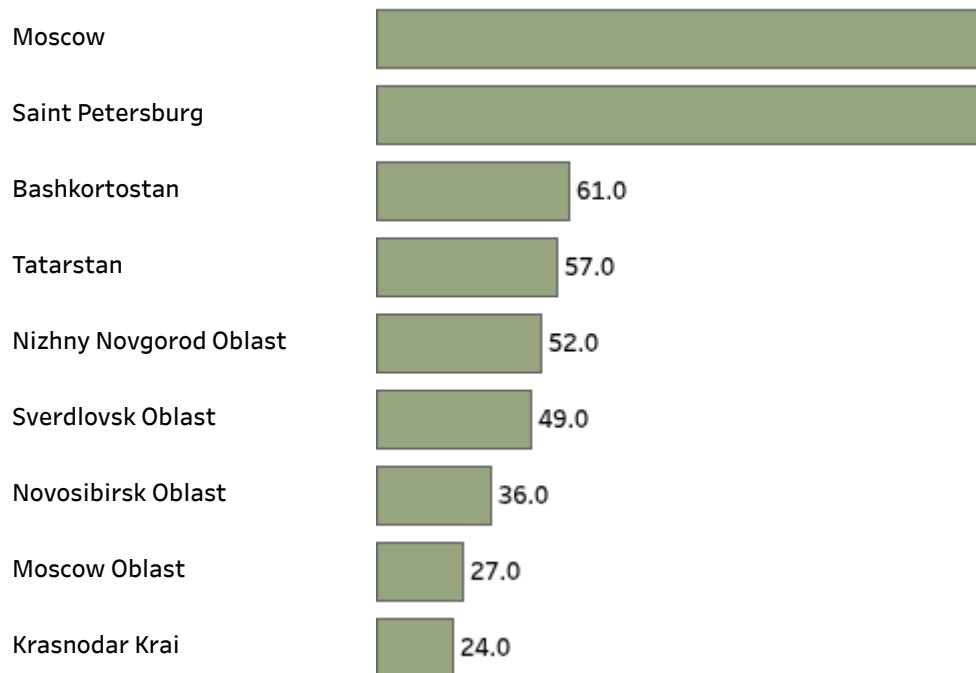
This graph shows the rating of regions where people were most often detained at rallies from 2020 to 2023.

Select metric

Number of detentions

Select year

2024



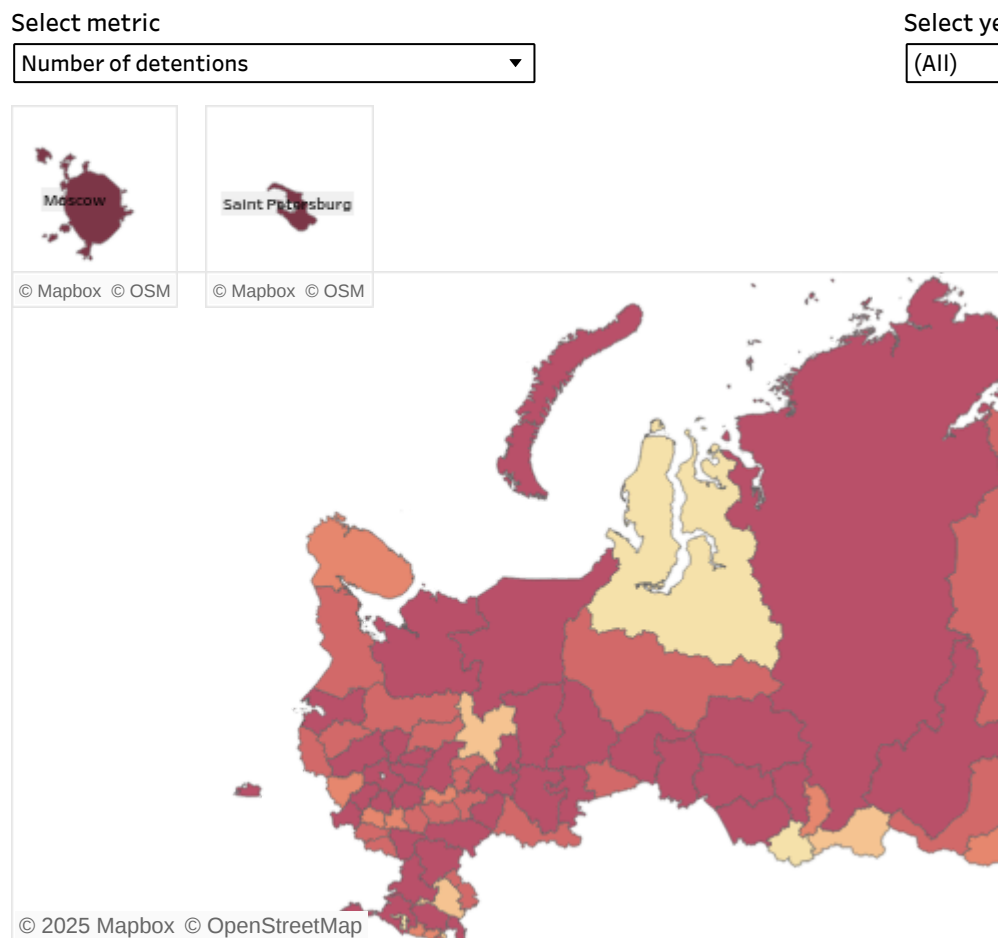
In 2020, despite the undisputed leadership of Moscow and St. Petersburg, Khabarovskiy Krai was in third place in terms of detentions at rallies: residents were **protesting** against the arrest of former governor Sergei Furgal.

Throughout 2020-2024, the top 10 regions where people were most often detained at rallies always include Krasnodarskiy Krai and Tatarstan. In addition, Bashkortostan took the third place in 2024, when mass protests took place in support of Bashkir activist Fail Alsynov.

Regions map

The map shows the regions where we collected information about detentions in 2020-2024. Each subject is coloured differently: the

darker the shade, the more detentions there were.



FILTER DESCRIPTION

«Select metric» shows either the number of detentions or the number of events with detentions.

«Select colour detail» — this filter separates the data by region and by the attributes of the events: authorities approval, type, demand level, organiser type.

«Select column grouping» — is located on the heatmap «Cause». The filter shows the division of data by year, region, or attributes of the events: Authorities approval, type, demand level, organiser type.



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

Ещё почитать

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The strangling of Crimea



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