

Rights in Russia Week-ending 22 December 2023

Russia's war on Ukraine	<p>Russian authorities continue to conscript Ukrainian civilians in occupied areas or otherwise try to forcibly enlist them, including those in detention, into the Russian military, which is a war crime, Human Rights Watch said. (HRW, 20/12/23)</p> <p>Wagner mercenary leader Yevgeny Prigozhin's death by plane crash was ordered by Security Council chief Nikolai Patrushev, a close ally of President Vladimir Putin and former spy, The Wall Street Journal reported. (The Moscow Times, 22/12/23)</p> <p>A court in Russia's republic of Bashkortostan has sentenced ethnic Bashkir activist Ramilya Saitova to five years in prison over an anti-war video, local media reported Thursday. (The Moscow Times, 22/12/23)</p> <p>Sources in Russian law enforcement on December 22 said a probe had been launched against self-exiled opposition politician Leonid Gozman on charge of spreading "fake" information about Russia's armed forces involved in Moscow's ongoing invasion of Ukraine. (RFE/RL, 22/12/23)</p> <p>A court in Russia's Far Eastern city of Khabarovsk said on December 21 that two individuals have been sentenced to prison terms of eight and seven years on charges of financing Ukraine's armed forces. (RFE/RL, 22/12/23)</p>
Navalny	<p>Russian judges halted new criminal proceedings for jailed Alexei Navalny as reports said he has not contacted his lawyers in nearly two weeks; a UN official has said his absence amounted to a "forced disappearance". The Interior Ministry added two of Navalny's associates - Maria Pevchikh and Dmitry Nizovtsev - to its wanted list on unspecified charges. (The Guardian, 18/12/23; RFE/RL, 21/12/23)</p>
Writers / Journalists	<p>Russia placed novelist Grigory Chkhartishvili – pen name Boris Akunin – on its register of "extremists and terrorists" for criticism of the war against Ukraine. Amnesty International condemned the move as 'shameful'. Moscow-based Zakharov Publishing House, which has published Chkhartishvili since the 1990s, said on 19/12 police had searched its offices. ((The Guardian, 18/12/23; Amnesty International, 19/12/23; RFE/RL, 19/12/23)</p> <p>The EU's chief diplomat, Josep Borrell, <u>called</u> on Russia to "immediately release" Alsu Kurmasheva, a journalist of RFE/RL's Tatar-Bashkir Service held in Russia for two months. Activists who protested her arrest and that of other journalists were charged with violating public gatherings regulations. (RFE/RL, 18/12/23; see also CPJ, 14/12/23, Front Line Defenders, 20/12/23; RFE/RL, 19/12/23)</p> <p>Russia's Interior Ministry on Tuesday <u>issued</u> an arrest warrant for Denis Kamalyagin, chief editor of <i>Pskovskaya Guberniya</i>, after banning him from leaving the country. He fled Russia over a year ago. (The Moscow Times, 18/12/23)</p>
Rights activists	<p>The press service of the Moscow criminal courts said on December 19 that the Meshchansky district court sentenced human rights activist Alyona Krylova, who was earlier extradited from Kyrgyzstan, to two years in prison on a charge of organizing an extremist group. (RFE/RL, 20/12/23)</p> <p>An appeals court in Russia's Mari El Republic on December 19 upheld a ruling to shut down the Man and Law rights group, members said, announcing the closing of the group following the failure of their appeal. (RFE/RL, 20/12/23)</p>
'Elections'	<p>Police in Siberia detained rights activist Olga Suvorova on 18/12 in Krasnoyarsk after she took part in a Moscow meeting of a group that proposed journalist Yekaterina Duntsova as a presidential candidate. (RFE/RL, 18/12/23)</p>
LGBT rights	<p>A Russian music channel has been fined for displaying "LGBT propaganda" by airing a <u>music video</u> by popular pro-war singer Nikolai Baskov, the independent Vyorstka news website <u>reported</u> Wednesday. (The Moscow Times, 20/12/23)</p>

