Rights in Russia
Week-ending 3 January 2025

Russia's War against Ukraine

Russia and Ukraine have carried out a major prisoner exchange, with at least 150 people from each side returning home before New Year's Eve. (The Guardian, 30/12/24)

Police in Ukraine have identified a Russian commander involved in the murder of 52-year-old Bucha resident Iryna Filkina, according to the Bucha City Council. According to Ukraine's National Police, the person identified as having been involved in the murder is 29-year-old Artem Taraev, the commander of the 234th Air Assault Regiment of the Russian Army's 76th Guards Airborne Division. (Meduza, 30/12/24)

Police in Leningrad region arrested three schoolchildren aged 10 and 11 for extinguishing an eternal flame monument by throwing snow on it. The Investigative Committee's local branch opened a case on charges of "rehabilitating Nazism." (Meduza, 2/1/25)

In occupied parts of Ukraine, Russian forces have imposed a new Moscow-backed school curriculum, eliminating lessons in Ukrainian language and culture. (RFE/RL, 29/12/24)

After Azerbaijan's president accused Russia of accidentally shooting down an airliner and covering up the cause, public anger in the Caucasian country is mounting against Moscow for its handling of the incident. […] Putin has not accepted Russia's responsibility for the crash and stopped short of stating what multiple pieces of evidence suggest: that a Russian missile fired amid what Moscow said was a Ukrainian drone attack on Grozny may have led to the disaster. (RFE/RL, 1/1/25; RFE/RL, 31/12/24)

A Moscow court has ordered Yandex to remove images of an oil refinery from its mapping service, citing the risk of Ukrainian drone attacks, TASS reported, referencing court documents. (Meduza, 3/1/25)

Other news

Oil from two damaged Russian tanker ships, Volgoneft-212 and Volgoneft-239, has been detected on beaches in annexed Crimea, Russian authorities said Thursday, as volunteers intensify efforts to address the environmental fallout. (The Moscow Times, 2/1/25)

Police in Yakutsk detained staff at the Number One nightclub after officials accused the venue of hosting performances featuring transgender entertainers from Thailand. The raid, conducted at the club, was prompted by a complaint from the Yakutsk Administrative Commission, which accused the club of "publicly promoting non-traditional relationships and gender transition." (The Moscow Times, 2/1/25)

Russian rapper Ligalize responded to being designated a "foreign agent" by Russia's Justice Ministry with the release of a new song on Monday, titled "Vsemirnye" — a play on the Russian words for "worldwide" and "everyone is peaceful." The song features other prominent Russian artists, including the rap group Kasta and the rock band Nogu Svelo. (The Moscow Times, 30/12/24)

Andrei Kotov, arrested in October for operating a travel agency for gay customers, was found dead in his Moscow cell while in pretrial detention. (RFE/RL, 29/12/24)

The United States has imposed sanctions against the Russian judge who sentenced human rights activist Alexei Gorinov to seven years in jail for speaking against the war in Ukraine. The U.S. Treasury Department on December 31 said it was imposing sanctions on Olesya Mendeleeva "for her role in the arbitrary detention" of Gorinov, a former Moscow municipal deputy. (RFE/RL, 31/12/24)