Rights in Russia
Week-ending 22 August 2025

Russia's War against Ukraine

A much-anticipated summit between US President Donald Trump and Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin ended without a deal on a cease-fire in Ukraine. (RFE/RL, 15/8/25)

Journalist Vladyslav Yesypenko, released from Russian custody in June, described how beatings and electrocution were used to make him sign a confession he later retracted in court. (RFE/RL, 17/8/25)

Russia and Ukraine exchanged a list of 31 civilians held by each side for a potential swap, Russia's Human Rights Commissioner Tatyana Moskalkova said on Monday. (The Moscow Times, 18/8/25)

In the second quarter of 2025, the number of people receiving bonuses for signing new contracts with the army was two and a half times lower than during the same period in 2024. (Meduza, 19/8/25)

Russia has returned the bodies of 1,000 Ukrainian soldiers, five of whom died while in Russian captivity, authorities in Kyiv and Moscow said Tuesday. (The Moscow Times, 19/8/25)

The Supreme Court of the self-proclaimed Luhansk People's Republic sentenced a man to 17 years in prison for treason, reportedly for passing military information to Ukraine. (Meduza, 20/8/25)

Russian authorities have reportedly been targeting migrants, detainees, and convicts from Central Asia to enlist them in the Russian military since February 2022. (RFE/RL, 21/8/25)

Russian prosecutors fined Lyudmila Telen, first deputy director at the Yeltsin Center 45,000 rubles ($560) for "discrediting the Russian armed forces". (RFE/RL, 21/8/25)

Russia's Federal Security Service (FSB) said Wednesday that its agents killed and detained members of a Ukrainian sabotage group in the western Bryansk region. (The Moscow Times, 20/8/25)

French researcher Laurent Vinatier who is serving a three-year prison sentence is under investigation for possible spying, charges carrying a maximum sentence of 20 years. (The Moscow Times, 21/8/25)

Russia returned three Ukrainian children and a disabled young man. (The Moscow Times, 21/8/25)

Now employees of the Bolshoi Theater will also be judged - and monitored - by another criteria: their interest in, and views on, Russia's all-out war on Ukraine. (RFE/RL, 22/8/25)

Ivan Okhlopkov, a Russian soldier, told journalists that he took part in the killing of five Ukrainian prisoners of war in the Donetsk region in May 2024. (Meduza, 22/8/25)

Other news

The Supreme Court of the Siberian republic of Altai rejected a lawsuit challenging a controversial municipal reform passed by the regional parliament in June. (The Moscow Times, 18/8/25)

The AIDS.Center foundation, one of Russia's leading HIV support organizations, says it has been stripped of government funding this year. (The Moscow Times, 18/8/25)

Moscow's Higher School of Economics (HSE) will develop a methodology for assessing and monitoring students' attitudes toward "traditional spiritual and moral values." (Meduza, 19/8/25)

At least 100 preschools across Russia and occupied parts of Ukraine will begin piloting state-backed "patriotic lessons" this fall, the Education Ministry announced. (The Moscow Times, 19/8/25)

A court in Krasnoyarsk region rejected a lawsuit challenging Kremlin-backed reforms that scrap most local councils and shift power to the regional government. (The Moscow Times, 19/8/25)

Crime in Russia has hit its highest level in 12 years. According to the Prosecutor General's Office, Russia registered 27,124 crimes in the first half of 2025. (The Moscow Times, 20/8/25)

Russia's new state-backed messaging app Max will come pre-installed on all devices sold in the country starting on Sept. 1. (The Moscow Times, 21/8/25)

A 17-year-old was charged with "rehabilitating Nazism" after he allegedly submitted a photo of Billy Herrington, an adult film actor, for a World War II memorial. (The Moscow Times, 22/8/25)

A Moscow court ruled Russians who pay for Instagram verification risk criminal prosecution for "financing extremism" with a penalty of up to eight years in prison. (The Moscow Times, 22/8/25)

Dozens of migrants from Tajikistan say they have been held by Russian authorities at Moscow's Zhukovsky Airport for over a week. (RFE/RL, 22/8/25)

Seda Suleymanova, a Chechen woman forced back to the region after fleeing her family, may have been killed and buried in her home village. (Meduza, 22/8/25)