Rights in Russia
Week-ending 2 January 2025

Russia's War against Ukraine

President Vladimir Putin signed legislation relieving Russia of any obligation to enforce criminal rulings issued by foreign courts or international judicial bodies to which it does not belong. The legislation, which amends Russia's constitution, sends a clear signal that Moscow does not plan to comply with any future rulings from a tribunal on the war in Ukraine that would seek to prosecute Russian officials. (The Moscow Times, 29/12/25)

The attack on the Mariupol Drama Theater was one of the most notorious Russian atrocities in its near four-year full-scale invasion of Ukraine, reportedly killing hundreds of civilians -- including children -- who were sheltering in the basement and destroying one of the city's cultural icons. Now, Russian occupation authorities in Mariupol have held a glitzy ceremony to celebrate the theater's reopening, but there's a snag: There are no shows scheduled there for the foreseeable future. (RFE/RL, 29/12/25)

President Putin signed an executive order authorizing the military to summon members of its mobilization reserve next year for "special" assemblies aimed at protecting critical infrastructure. The order directs the government to draw up a list of facilities requiring protection, while the Defense Ministry is tasked with designating the military units responsible for conducting the assemblies. (The Moscow Times, 30/12/25)

President Putin used his traditional New Year's address to project an image of Russians as united behind the country's armed forces and the war in Ukraine, vowing victory on the battlefield as the conflict approaches its fourth year. This year's speech was noticeably muted and followed a familiar pre-war format. Dec. 31 also marks the 26th anniversary of Putin coming to power after former President Boris Yeltsin announced his resignation in 1999. (The Moscow Times, 31/12/25)

Other news

Russian business leaders have appealed to President Putin to rein in a wave of state asset seizures that has affected factories, ports and major corporations worth more than 4 trillion rubles ($43 billion), the Kommersant business daily reported. (The Moscow Times, 28/12/25)

A Moscow municipal judge has tossed out a class action lawsuit against state media regulator Roskomnadzor and the Digital Development Ministry filed by a group of WhatsApp and Telegram users in Russia. The judge from Moscow's Tagansky District Court ruled that Kaluga activist Konstantin Larionov had failed to provide evidence that he is "authorized to file a lawsuit to protect the rights of Telegram and WhatsApp owners". Larionov, along with several dozen co-plaintiffs, filed a class action lawsuit against Roskomnadzor and the Digital Development Ministry on Dec. 23, arguing that government restrictions on Telegram and WhatsApp calls violate their constitutional rights, including freedom of information and the secrecy of communications. (The Moscow Times, 29/12/25)

Russia's General Prosecutor's Office designated George Washington University an "undesirable" organization, accusing the institution of helping promote anti-Russian sentiment and spread false claims about the war in Ukraine. (The Moscow Times, 29/12/25)

The Russian government plans to sell Moscow's Domodedovo airport early next year, the Finance Ministry said, several months after taking ownership of the facility over allegations it had come under foreign control. (The Moscow Times, 30/12/25)

Allies of the late opposition activist Alexei Navalny released an investigation alleging that a luxury palace built along the Black Sea coast in annexed Crimea belongs to President Vladimir Putin. The investigation by Navalny's Anti-Corruption Foundation (FBK) said construction at the Cape Aya site far exceeds earlier structures on the property, which Ukrainian media once dubbed "Yanukovych's dacha." (The Moscow Times, 30/12/25)