Rights in Russia
Week-ending 29 May 2026

Russia's War against Ukraine

Russia's Southern District Military Court sentenced Victor Kuzmenko from Mariupol to 18 years' maximum-security imprisonment. (Human Rights in Ukraine, 25/5/26)

The Russian occupation 'Crimean high court' sentenced a couple from Yalta to 17 and 15 years for supposedly 'spying for Ukraine.' (Human Rights in Ukraine, 25/5/26)

Kazakhstan's justice ministry said it will not enforce a decision allowing Ukraine's Naftogaz to collect a $1.4bn international arbitration award from Gazprom. (The Moscow Times, 25/5/26)

President Putin signed a law forgiving up to 10 million rubles ($140,000) in unpaid debt for new military recruits and their spouses. (The Moscow Times, 26/5/26)

Several European countries and the EU summoned the heads of the Russian diplomatic missions to protest over Moscow's warning suggesting further strikes on Kyiv. (The Guardian, 26/5/27)

About 50 Orthodox priests have been persecuted for opposition to the war. (RFE/RL, 26/5/26)

Russia's State Duma has passed a bill that would allow Russians who have left the country to be prosecuted for offenses "against the interests of the Russian Federation." (Meduza, 26/5/26)

Daniil Bulgakov, a programmer from Donetsk, spent three years and four months in Russian captivity, during which he was subjected to horrific torture. (Human Rights in Ukraine, 26/5/26)

Mamut Belyalov, abducted from his home in occupied Crimea in 2022 and tortured has been charged with treason. (Human Rights in Ukraine, 26/5/26)

In Finland a court suspended the deportation of anti-war activist Roman Golikov. (Meduza, 26/5/26)

Nearly half a million Russian soldiers have been killed in Ukraine since the start of Putin's invasion more than four years ago, according to the British spy agency GCHQ. (The Guardian, 27/5/26)

Film director Andrey Zvyagintsev has sent a direct message to Vladimir Putin urging him to start listening to the Russian people and end the "senseless" war in Ukraine. (The Guardian, 27/5/26)

Olha Cherniavska from Zaporizhzhia region, abducted on 25 May 2023, held incommunicado and tortured, was charged with spying. (Human Rights in Ukraine, 27/5/25)

Andrei Kiyko, a convicted serial killer, has gone missing at the front. (Meduza, 27/5/26)

The St. Petersburg International Book Fair has become another venue for promoting narratives supporting Russia's invasion of Ukraine. (The Moscow Times, 27/5/26)

Jailed Lenur Khalilov receives no treatment for cancer. (Human Rights in Ukraine, 28/5/26)

The Russian state news agencies have reduced coverage of Putin this year. (Meduza, 28/5/26)

Oleksandr Krokhmaliuk, a medic with Ukraine's Azov Regiment, taken prisoner by Russian troops in May 2022 died of injuries sustained in Russian captivity. (Human Rights in Ukraine, 29/5/26)

Other news

Russian messenger Max is an unreliable service that constantly spies on its users. (Meduza, 22/5/26)

Daria Egereva, one of Russia's foremost Indigenous rights activists, remains in detention, accused of membership of a terror group. No trial date has been set. (The Guardian, 22/5/26)

Olga Bukhanovskaya presented a paper at the Congress of Psychiatrists of Russia on what she called "transgender spectrum disorder" — a category she said includes "homosexualism." (Meduza, 26/5/26)

Andrei Dymov, a mathematician at the Higher School of Economics (HSE), was sentenced to 3.5 years for donating 3,500 rubles to the Anti-Corruption Foundation. (The Moscow Times, 26/5/26)

Ksenia Belousova was sentenced to three years and 25 days in prison for making a hookah out of an Orthodox Easter cake. (The Moscow Times, 27/5/26)

The pro-Kremlin tabloid Komsomolskaya Pravda, the business daily Kommersant, and the news outlet Ura.ru all ran briefs on the wage arrears spike — then quietly pulled them. (Meduza, 28/5/26)

President Putin and his purported partner, Alina Kabayeva, hired at least 20 staff to help raise the two boys widely believed to be their sons. (RFE/RL, Meduza, 28/5/26)

Europe's leading human rights body decided not to remove Chechen Ruslan Kutayev from its Russian dissident advisory panel after earlier suspending him. (The Moscow Times, 28/5/26)

At least six Russian political prisoners died in custody so far this year. (The Moscow Times, 29/5/26)