Rights in Russia
Week-ending 25 September 2026

Russia's War against Ukraine

Amid rumors of a new mobilization, senior Russian officials have spent recent months trying to open accounts at foreign banks and move their assets abroad. (Meduza, 18/9//26)

US President Trump signed legislation aimed at increasing economic pressure on Russia over its war on Ukraine. (The Guardian, 19/9/26)

The UN published a report on conflict-related sexual violence in Ukraine, based on interviews conducted by its monitoring mission. (Meduza, 20/9/26)

Military analyst Dmitry Kuznets said Russia is recruiting around 30,000 people a month, enough to offset the numbers killed, seriously wounded, captured or missing. (The Moscow Times, 21/9/26)

President Putin signed an executive order placing the Russian subsidiary of Illinois-based packaging manufacturer AptarGroup under temporary government control. (The Moscow Times, 21/9/26)

Serhiy Chekhovsky was sentenced to 18 years in a strict regime penal colony on an unlawful charge of espionage. (KHPG, 21/9/26)

Draft boards and courts increasingly cite a school subject called OBZh (now renamed OBZR) as grounds to turn down conscripts who want to do alternative civilian service. (Meduza, 21/9/26)

The European External Action Service (EEAS) has proposed to sanction a further 827 entities and 744 individuals. All entities are connected to Russia's arms industry (RFE/RL, 22/9/26)

Michal Plamenek, a Czech citizen, was jailed for 13 days on Tuesday for staging an anti-war protest on Red Square. (The Moscow Times, 22/9/26)

Russia convicted at least 555 Ukrainian citizens of espionage or treason. (First Department, 22/9/26)

Memorial appealed to Pavel Durov to anonymise paid reactions on Telegram. (OVD-Info, 22/9/26)

Russia's financial monitoring agency Rosfinmonitoring added exiled journalist and YouTuber Yury Dud to its database of "terrorists and extremists" on Wednesday. (The Moscow Times, 23/9/26)

Kremlin-backed executives have taken control of Russian operations of Swiss Nestlé and French Auchan, Lemana Pro and FM Logistics. The Kremlin said hostile actions by "unfriendly" countries played a role in its decision. (The Moscow Times, 18/9/26; 23/9/26)

Yevhen Karpenko was sentenced 25 years' imprisonment in a strict regime penal colony, with the first five years in a cell-type prison, on an unlawful charge of treason. (KHPG, 23/9/26)

Russia's FSB security service arrested a man in Moscow accused of planning to blow up the motorcade of a high-ranking government official. (The Moscow Times, 23/9/26)

Mikhail Fetisov, a neurologist from St Petersburg, lost his job for speaking out in support of Ukraine and now in custody on unlawful criminal charges. (Political Prisoners. Memorial, 23/9/26)

Kostiantyn Zinovkin, Hryhory Semykopenko, Oleksiy Semykopenko and Vladyslav Vidlatsky, were sentenced to terms from 17 to 28 years on unlawful charges. (KHPG, 24/9/26)

The Finance Ministry proposes tax increases to fund the costs of war. (The Moscow Times, 24/9/26)

The State Duma is creating a new committee on artificial intelligence. (The Moscow Times, 24/9/26)

Russia's occupation 'Luhansk people's republic high court' sentenced Serhiy Iliechko to over 12 years' maximum-security imprisonment on an unlawful charge of treason. (KHPG, 25/9/26)

A court in Kemerovo region rejected for the second time an application to release Crimean Tatar Yashar Shikhametov on medical grounds. (KHPG, 25/9/26)

Other news

Film director Andrei Zvyagintsev has been designated as a "foreign agent." (Meduza, 18/9/26)

Ex-Russian official Marat Kambolov was elected president of South Ossetia. (The Moscow Times,

Officially United Russia gained nearly 58% of the vote in the State Duma elections, with 355 out of 450 seats. (RFE/RL, 21/9/26) The State Duma will include 49 deputies who are Ukraine war veterans. (The Guardian, 21/9/26) Without fraud, United Russia would have won about 34% of the vote. (Meduza, 21/9/26) Turnout in the elections to the State Duma was about 40%. (Meduza, 22/9/26) Statistical analysis of voting patterns shows in all likelihood that United Russia got millions of votes above what the statistical model would predict. (RFE/RL, 23/9/26) Officials monitored public-sector employees' turnout at polling stations. (Meduza, 23/9/26).

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Quotes of the Week

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"I believed them. I believed they could do everything they said they would … My fear was too great. I was so worried for my family and also for myself," […]

- Rita Flores, a 29-year-old Russian artist, activist and former member of the Pussy Riot collective, describing her recruitment and three-year handling by officers from Russia's FSB security service

Source: Shaun Walker, ''My fear was too great': the Pussy Riot member recruited by Russian spies to inform on fellow activists,' The Guardian, 19/9/26)

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"There's no need to invent myths about Putin. Let the facts reveal the truth about him and his system. The Kremlin leader has no ideology. The war in Ukraine has made this clear: this war is not an extension of his ideas, it is merely a means of staying in power."

- Roman Badanin, journalist and co-author with Mikhail Rubin of *The Tsar in Person*, co-founders of the independent media project Proekt, specialising in investigative journalism

Source: Kim Willsher, ''The choice was prison or exile': journalists who fled Russia publish grim portrait of Putin,' The Guardian, 22/9/26)

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'The Russian government's escalating attacks on censorship circumvention services is part of its broader assault on access to information, privacy, and freedom of expression. These repressive tactics affect millions of people in Russia seeking to connect to the internet without state censorship. […] With the government escalating attacks on digital rights, it is crucial for groups working to ensure uncensored access to the internet in Russia receive financial, institutional, and other essential support."

- Hugh Williamson, Europe and Central Asia director at Human Rights Watch.

Source: 'Russia Crackdown on Bypassing Online Censorship,'Human Rights Watch, 24/9/26)