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RUSSIA: AUTHORITIES DEPLOY NEW CRIMINAL LAWS TO SILENCE CRITICISM OF RUSSIA'S WAR IN UKRAINE

SUMMARY

As Russia continues its war of aggression against Ukraine, it also fights a battle on the “home front” against those who criticize the war and the war crimes committed by Russian forces.

Dozens of people in Russia are facing up to 10 or more years' imprisonment for sharing what the authorities claim is “false information about the Armed Forces” – a new crime introduced into law to clamp down on war critics. Those prosecuted include students, lawyers, artists and politicians. The voices raised against the war, and against the abuses carried out by Russian forces, must not be silenced. The freedom to access and share information, and to express opinions and ideas, including dissent, is a crucial element in building an effective anti-war movement in Russia. By eliminating critical voices, the Russian authorities are trying to bolster and perpetuate public support for their war of aggression in Ukraine.

Amnesty International has collected the stories of ten people who are in detention today because of their public criticism of the war. The actual number of those facing prosecution for opposing the war under various articles of the Criminal Code reportedly exceeds 200.¹ We call on the Russian authorities to immediately and unconditionally release them, and to repeal new legislation and all other legislation incompatible with the right to freedom of expression.

We reiterate our calls on the international community to use all means offered by international and regional mechanisms to ensure effective investigation of reported war crimes by Russian forces in Ukraine, and bring those responsible to account. A crucial element in the international effort to end this catalog of abuses is to support the voices of those in Russia who actively oppose its aggression in Ukraine.

REPORTED PAST AND ALLEGED CURRENT WAR CRIMES BY RUSSIAN FORCES IN UKRAINE

Since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine on 24 February Amnesty International has uncovered serious violations of international humanitarian law by Russian forces – including clear war crimes – in at least 20 towns and cities across Ukraine. We have found evidence of Russian soldiers carrying out extrajudicial executions in the Kyiv region,² killing civilians in indiscriminate attacks in Kharkiv,³ and deliberately targeting a drama theatre in Mariupol where hundreds of civilians had sought shelter.

Other alleged war crimes require an immediate international investigation, including the 29 July explosion in Olenivka village that killed more than 50 Ukrainian prisoners of war held by the so-called “Donetsk People's Republic” forces in eastern Ukraine. However, Russian authorities have hitherto refused to allow international investigators onto the site to launch a comprehensive probe.

Russia has largely ignored reports of violations of international humanitarian law by its forces or sought to distract from these with misinformation and disinformation. It has been engaged in an elaborate campaign to prevent Russian society from learning about or discussing these allegations. Prosecution of those sharing critical information has been the cornerstone of this campaign.

BACKGROUND AND ADOPTION OF THE LAW ON “DISSEMINATION OF FALSE INFORMATION ABOUT THE USE OF RUSSIAN ARMED FORCES”

¹ Важные истории, “«Чтобы страх поселился в каждом доме». Итоги полугода уголовного преследования противников войны”, 22 August 2022, stories.media/reportages/2022/08/22/antiwar-prosecution

² Amnesty International, *Ukraine: “He's not coming back”. War crimes in Northwest areas of Kyiv Oblast*, 6 May 2022, [amnesty.org/en/documents/eur50/5561/2022/en](https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/eur50/5561/2022/en)

³ Amnesty International, “Anyone can die at any time”: *Indiscriminate attacks by Russian forces in Kharkiv, Ukraine*, 13 June 2022, [amnesty.org/en/latest/research/2022/06/anyone-can-die-at-any-time-kharkiv](https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/research/2022/06/anyone-can-die-at-any-time-kharkiv)

Russia's invasion of Ukraine was met with widespread criticism at home. Tens of thousands of Russians peacefully protested in the streets and criticized the aggression in their social media. Russian authorities responded with a crackdown on the protesters and critics, reportedly arresting more than 16,000 for violating the country's unduly restrictive regulations of public assemblies.⁴ The authorities also cracked down on the few remaining independent media⁵ by forcing many to shut down, leave the country or limit their reporting of the war and cite Russian official reports instead. More human rights NGOs have since been labelled "foreign agents" or "undesirable", have faced arbitrary closure or blocking of their websites and been subjected to other forms of harassment.

The authorities followed up the crackdown with swift legislative innovation. Within days of the invasion, in an apparent attempt to cut procedural corners, members of the State Duma took up an unrelated bill,⁶ which had been shelved after its first reading nearly four years earlier, and completely changed its content via multiple new amendments. The overhauled bill introduced Article 207.3 ("public dissemination of knowingly false information about the use of the Russian Armed Forces") as well as two more articles to the Criminal Code,⁷ all of which criminalized various expressions of opinions critical of the Russian authorities, their actions, and their policies.

The changes were introduced on 2 March,⁸ the bill was passed by both houses of the Russian parliament, signed by President Vladimir Putin into law and came into force on 4 March. This lightning-fast process prevented public discussion of the amendments and demonstrated that the authorities would not countenance criticism of the war in Ukraine.

Three weeks later, on 25 March, lawmakers further amended Article 207.3 to criminalize "dissemination of knowingly false information" not only about the Russian Armed Forces but also any Russian state bodies acting abroad. This was adopted in the same swift manner.

At the time of writing, more than 80 criminal cases were underway related to just one of the new offences, the specific "crime" of "dissemination of knowingly false information" in connection with the Russian aggression in Ukraine.⁹

CONTENT OF THE NEW LEGISLATIVE CHANGES

Article 207.3 of the Criminal Code criminalizes "public dissemination of knowingly false information disguised as truthful messages containing data about the use of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation to protect the interests of the Russian Federation and its citizens, and uphold international peace and security, as well as data about the execution by state bodies of the Russian Federation of their authority beyond Russian borders for the same aims". Depending on circumstances, the maximum penalty under this law may reach 15 years' imprisonment. Under paragraph 2 of the article, which is invoked in most reported cases, the penalty includes imprisonment of between five and ten years or a fine of between 3 and 5 million rubles (US\$55,000 to \$92,000¹⁰).

According to criminal case files that Amnesty International has obtained, the investigating and prosecuting authorities do not verify whether the published information is false, or "knowingly false". Instead, in most of the cases reviewed, the investigators simply claim that the publications in question have contradicted statements by Russian government officials, such as the Foreign Minister or the spokesperson for the Ministry of Defense. These statements, which sometimes contradict one another and often contain misinformation and disinformation,¹¹ are effectively considered "the truth" that needs no verification. As a result, well-known and checked facts are labelled "false information" on the premise of contravening the official narrative of the Russian government, and referring to these facts becomes a serious criminal offence.

INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS

⁴ According to OVD-info, a Russian human rights NGO that monitors politically motivated arrests.

⁵ Amnesty International, "Russian Federation: End censorship on voices against the war", 14 March 2022, [amnesty.org/en/documents/eur46/5345/2022/en/](https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/eur46/5345/2022/en/);

"Russian Federation: Authorities impose censorship on media and crush peaceful anti-war protests following invasion of Ukraine", 28 February 2022, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/eur46/5272/2022/en/>

⁶ Bill No. 464757-7 was originally written to criminalize implementation or support of international sanctions imposed on Russia.

⁷ Articles 280.3 ("public actions aimed at discrediting the Russian Armed Forces") and 284.2 ("calls to introduce restrictive measures against the Russian Federation, its citizens or legal entities").

⁸ State Duma of the Russian Federation, "Внесены поправки об уголовной ответственности за распространение фейков о действиях ВС РФ", 2 March 2022, duma.gov.ru/news/53589

⁹ See, for example, OVD-Info, "Summary of anti-war repressions. Five months of war", 2 August 2022, data.ovdinfo.org/summary-anti-war-repressions-five-months-war

¹⁰ Using MOEX exchange rate as of 1 July 2022.

¹¹ See, for example, Reuters, "Russia shifts stance on hospital bombing that sparked world outrage", 10 March 2022, [reuters.com/world/europe/russia-says-claim-that-it-bombed-childrens-hospital-are-fake-news-2022-03-10](https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/russia-says-claim-that-it-bombed-childrens-hospital-are-fake-news-2022-03-10)

Russia is a party to multiple international human rights instruments, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the Commonwealth of Independent States Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (CIS Convention) and the Helsinki Final Act. Despite the termination of Russia's membership in the Council of Europe, the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) also remains in effect until 16 September 2022. All of these international instruments, as well as Russia's own Constitution and customary international law, require the Russian authorities to respect human rights, including the right to freedom of expression.

The prohibition of sharing information about the activities of the Russian Armed Forces interferes with the right to freedom of expression, including freedom to seek, receive and impart information, which is guaranteed by the ICCPR,¹² ECHR,¹³ the CIS Convention¹⁴ and the Russian Constitution.¹⁵ While the Russian authorities may limit these rights, any such limitations must be necessary and proportionate in order to protect the existence of the Russian nation or its territorial integrity or political independence against force or threat of force.¹⁶ The blanket criminalization of criticism of the Armed Forces does not meet this threshold.

The use of this legislation to silence criticism of Russia's aggression, especially by defining all information contrary to the Russian government's official position as "false information about the Armed Forces", violates the right to freedom of expression. As recognized by the UN Human Rights Committee, "freedom of expression is a necessary condition for the realization of the principles of transparency and accountability that are, in turn, essential for the promotion and protection of human rights".¹⁷ The prosecution of individuals for reporting on violations of the laws and customs of war by the Russian Armed Forces appears to contribute to impunity for war crimes and Russia's apparent cover up of grave violations of the Geneva Conventions. As such this practice runs contrary to Russia's obligations under international humanitarian law, and especially Common Article 1 of the Geneva Conventions, to ensure respect for the Geneva Conventions, including by suppressing war crimes and punishing those responsible.

INDIVIDUAL CASES

At the time of writing, over 80 reported criminal cases had been opened under Article 207.3. While Amnesty International has not been able to review every one of them, there has been no reported instance in which the authorities were responding to an internationally-recognized crime. Below are some examples of how people in Russia are being prosecuted for peacefully expressing their critical opinion or opposition to the violations committed by the country's military in Ukraine.¹⁸

OPPOSITION POLITICIANS: ALEKSEY GORINOV AND ILYA YASHIN

Aleksey Gorinov and Ilya Yashin are members of the Russian opposition movement Solidarity and municipal deputies (councillors) in Krasnoselsky District of Moscow. Aleksey Gorinov, a lawyer by profession, has been politically active since the late 1980s when he supported democratic changes in the former Soviet Union. Ilya Yashin is a prominent opposition activist, who has been leading protests, organizing election campaigns and running a popular YouTube channel.

Aleksey Gorinov was arrested on 26 April for comments he had made at a municipal council session on 15 March. According to investigators, he was "disseminating knowingly false information" by calling the conflict an aggression and a war and stating that children die in it every day. Moreover, the investigators claimed, without providing any evidence, that Aleksey Gorinov had conspired with fellow municipal deputy Elena Kotyonochkina to disseminate this "false information".¹⁹ On 8 July, a district court in Moscow sentenced him to seven years' imprisonment, the first custodial sentence imposed under the newly-introduced Article 207.3.²⁰ Elena Kotyonochkina has managed to leave Russia.

Ilya Yashin was arrested on the night of 27 June as he was walking with a friend. He was accused of "disobeying police orders", although he and the friend denied that the police had issued any orders to them. Ilya Yashin was placed in administrative detention for 15 days. On the night of 12 July, hours before he was due to be released, the politician was

¹² ICCPR, Article 19(2).

¹³ ECHR, Article 10.

¹⁴ CIS Convention, Article 11.

¹⁵ Constitution of the Russian Federation, Article 29.

¹⁶ Siracusa Principles on the Limitation and Derogation Provisions in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; para 25.

¹⁷ UN Human Rights Committee, General Comment 34, para 4.

¹⁸ See also: Amnesty International, "Russia: Schoolteacher faces 10 years in prison for telling students about a strike on a Ukrainian hospital", 26 April 2022, [amnesty.org/en/documents/eur46/5512/2022/en](https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/eur46/5512/2022/en)

¹⁹ Closing indictment, on file with Amnesty International.

²⁰ Amnesty International, "Russia: Municipal councillor sentenced to seven years in jail for opposing the Ukraine war", 8 July 2022, [amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2022/07/russia-municipal-councillor-sentenced-to-seven-years-in-jail-for-opposing-the-ukraine-war](https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2022/07/russia-municipal-councillor-sentenced-to-seven-years-in-jail-for-opposing-the-ukraine-war)

informed that he was being investigated under Article 207.3(2).²¹ The criminal prosecution is reportedly based on a YouTube video in which Ilya Yashin discussed reports of the killings of civilians committed by the Russian forces in Bucha, Ukraine, and challenged the Kremlin's disinformation around these.²² On 13 July, Ilya Yashin was moved to pretrial detention.

FORMER STATE TELEVISION EMPLOYEE: MARINA OVSYANNIKOVA

Marina Ovsyannikova is a former editor from the Russian government-run Channel One who received international media attention when she interrupted a live news broadcast and displayed an anti-war placard in the studio on 14 March.²³ She was then fined for "holding an unlawful public assembly", left her job on TV and moved to Germany.

In July, Marina Ovsyannikova returned to Moscow. On 15 July, she held a solitary protest close to the Kremlin with a placard calling Vladimir Putin a murderer and saying that 352 children had been killed in Ukraine. The UN Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights²⁴ reported similar figures. Her protest lasted only four minutes but was widely covered by the independent media. Marina Ovsyannikova also posted a photo and a short video of the protest on her Telegram channel.

On 10 August, the Investigative Committee (a stand-alone state agency responsible for investigating serious crime) searched Marina Ovsyannikova's home and arrested and questioned her. She was charged under Article 207.3(2) for holding the 15 July protest and sharing the photo and video. According to the authorities, she had disseminated "knowingly false information" that the Russian Armed Forces kill civilians, including children. On the next day, following a closed court hearing, she was placed under house arrest, where she remained at the time of writing.

"AN ORDINARY PERSON": VIKTORIA PETROVA

Viktoria Petrova is a woman who worked as a manager in St. Petersburg. She has a Russian social media Vkontakte (VK) account where she discussed ongoing events with several dozen friends. Her lawyer described Viktoria Petrova as "an ordinary person... like us".²⁵ After the Russian invasion of Ukraine on 24 February, she regularly collected videos from various sources and shared them on her VK page asking viewers not to trust the official media and to protest against the war. Viktoria Petrova herself was arrested twice for her peaceful street protest and spent 10 days in administrative detention in March.

Early in the morning of 6 May, police arrested Viktoria Petrova at her home and charged her with violation of Article 207.3(2). Her home was searched, and the investigators seized her electronic gadgets and anti-war placards. She was placed in pretrial detention where she remained at the time of writing.

Viktoria Petrova is accused of publishing several posts on VK in which she harshly criticized the Russian authorities' decision to invade Ukraine, supporters of the war and war crimes committed by the Russian military. She also shared videos with speeches of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky and Russian journalists and activists condemning the war, footage of damage reportedly caused by Russian strikes, and her own video address. Viktoria Petrova called on viewers to protest, join anti-war rallies, send humanitarian aid to Ukrainians and share alternative information about the war with relatives and friends.

A JOURNALIST: MARIA PONOMARENKO

Maria Ponomarenko is a journalist with the online media outlet RusNews based in Barnaul, Altay Kray, Russia. She was arrested on 24 April in St. Petersburg, charged under Article 207.3(2) and placed in pretrial detention. She was later transferred to Barnaul and confined for several weeks in a psychiatric clinic for a mental health examination. According to her letter published by her supporters, while at the clinic she was forcibly injected with an unknown drug.²⁶ According to information available to Amnesty International, the prosecution was triggered by a publication on 17 March, now deleted, about the bombing of the Donetsk Regional Academic Drama Theatre in Mariupol by Russian forces the previous night. It

²¹ Amnesty International, "Russia: Authorities must drop case against Ilya Yashin – latest victim of clampdown on war critics", 13 July 2022, [amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2022/07/russia-authorities-must-drop-case-against-ilya-yashin-latest-victim-of-clampdown-on-war-critics](https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2022/07/russia-authorities-must-drop-case-against-ilya-yashin-latest-victim-of-clampdown-on-war-critics)

²² Ilya Yashin, "ПРЯМОЙ ЭФИР. Путину готовят трибунал. Ад встречает Жириновского. Хинштейн строчит доносы", 7 April 2022 <https://youtu.be/d15dn5LYxLs>, minute 44:38.

²³ Amnesty International, "Russia: Protesting live on TV is an act of great courage, not a crime", 15 March 2022, [amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2022/03/russia-protesting-live-on-tv-is-an-act-of-great-courage-not-a-crime](https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2022/03/russia-protesting-live-on-tv-is-an-act-of-great-courage-not-a-crime)

²⁴ UN OHCHR, "Ukraine: civilian casualty update 12 July 2022", [ohchr.org/en/news/2022/07/ukraine-civilian-casualty-update-12-july-2022](https://www.ohchr.org/en/news/2022/07/ukraine-civilian-casualty-update-12-july-2022)

²⁵ The Village: "«Обычный человек»: История Вики Петровой, которая написала пост во «ВКонтакте» — и на нее возбудили дело о фейках", 9 June 2022, the-village.ru/people/stories/common-people

²⁶ RusNews, "Мария Пономаренко о психиатрической клинике: «Насильно кололи неизвестной субстанцией... Вернулась в СИЗО как в санаторий»", 13 July 2022, t.me/smirusnews/12825

contained a video from the theatre made before the attack and a short comment denouncing civilian deaths. In its own research, Amnesty International concluded that the attack was conducted by Russian forces and that the evidence gathered by the organization demonstrates that it was a war crime.²⁷

A STUDENT ACTIVIST: DMITRY IVANOV

Dmitry Ivanov, a computer science student and leader of the students' rights group Moscow State University's Initiative Group (abbreviated "IG MGU" in Russian), was arrested on 28 April on the university campus. He was accused of sharing a publication on IG MGU's Telegram channel calling for peaceful protests, which in itself is regarded by the Russian authorities as an offence because of Russia's restrictive regulations of public assemblies.²⁸ A judge ordered his administrative detention for 10 days. On 8 May, as Dmitry Ivanov was leaving the detention centre, he was immediately re-arrested, again accused of calling for protests and his "administrative detention" extended by another 25 days. Dmitry Ivanov was to be released on 2 June, but on that day he was instead arrested for the third time in a row.

This time, the accusations were more serious: the student was charged under Article 207.3(2). According to case materials reviewed by Amnesty International, the authorities claim that Dmitry Ivanov "disseminated knowingly false information about the Russian Armed Forces" by reposting publications of Russian activists and journalists condemning war crimes, sharing several statements of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, by calling the conflict a war instead of its officially mandated description "special military operation" and by stating that the Russian military is destroying peaceful cities in Ukraine. At the time of writing, the activist remained in pretrial detention and his trial was scheduled to start on 21 September. As a result of his multiple arrests and detentions, he was also prevented from completing his final exams and graduating from the university.

A PRIEST: IOANN KURMOYAROV

Ioann Kurmoyarov, a Russian Orthodox Church priest and monk from St. Petersburg, ran a YouTube channel and a VK page where he published his commentary on spiritual issues and current events. Since the Russian invasion of Ukraine, he has been denouncing it as an aggression and urging Christians to condemn it. On 1 April 2022, he was stripped of his priesthood. On 7 June, Ioann Kurmoyarov was arrested, charged with "disseminating knowingly false information" under Article 207.3(2) and placed in pretrial detention.

AN ARTIST: ALEKSANDRA SKOCHILENKO

Aleksandra Skochilenko, an artist in St. Petersburg, replaced price tags in a local supermarket with little notes containing information about the war in Ukraine, such as the bombing of an arts school in Mariupol²⁹ on 31 March. On 11 April, officers of the Investigative Committee arrested her and charged her with "disseminating knowingly false information" under Article 207.3(2). She was placed in pretrial detention despite her health condition (celiac disease), which requires a special gluten-free diet that she has not been provided in pretrial detention. In June, she was placed in a psychiatric clinic in St. Petersburg for 20 days for an examination of her mental health.³⁰

A POLITICIAN AND JOURNALIST: VLADIMIR KARA-MURZA

Vladimir Kara-Murza is a prominent Russian political activist and journalist known for campaigning in support of the "Magnitsky list" (targeted financial and travel sanctions against people suspected of human rights abuses in Russia). In recent years, he survived two poisoning attempts, which Russian authorities have failed to investigate.

On 22 April, Vladimir Kara-Murza was arbitrarily arrested near his home in Moscow, purportedly for disobeying the police, and placed in administrative detention for 15 days. As his detention term was ending, he was charged under Article 207.3(2). The alleged offense was his speech at the Arizona House of Representatives (in the USA) on 15 March,³¹ in which he condemned the use of "cluster bombs on residential areas, the bombing of maternity wards and hospitals and schools" by the Russian military in Ukraine as war crimes. Vladimir Kara-Murza remains in pretrial detention.

On 2 August, the Investigative Committee added another charge to Vladimir Kara-Murza's case. He was accused of organizing a round table discussion about political prisoners in Russia, which was allegedly funded by an "undesirable

²⁷ Amnesty International, "Children": The attack on the Donetsk Regional Academic Drama Theatre in Mariupol, Ukraine, 30 June 2022, [amnesty.org/en/documents/eur50/5713/2022/en](https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/eur50/5713/2022/en)

²⁸ See also: Amnesty International, *No place for protest*, 12 August 2021, [amnesty.org/en/documents/eur46/4328/2021/en](https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/eur46/4328/2021/en)

²⁹ Washington Post, "Russian troops 'everywhere' in Mariupol as art school sheltering 400 is bombed", 20 March 2022, [washingtonpost.com/world/2022/03/20/mariupol-art-school-civilians-russia](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/03/20/mariupol-art-school-civilians-russia)

³⁰ Amnesty International, "Russian Federation: Further information: Artist's detention prolonged: Aleksandra Skochilenko", 9 June 2022, [amnesty.org/en/documents/eur46/5692/2022/en](https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/eur46/5692/2022/en)

³¹ Arizona House GOP, "Russian Opposition Leader Vladimir Kara-Murza Addresses the Arizona House of Representatives", 16 March 2022, youtu.be/9GY1srohskk, minute 8:56

organization” (association with such an organization being a crime in Russia, under Article 284.1(1) of the Criminal Code, punishable by up to four years’ imprisonment). Amnesty International has previously criticized the Russian law on “undesirable organizations” as a violation of the rights to freedom of association and expression, and highlighted its arbitrary application and enforcement.³²

A LAWYER: DMITRY TALANTOV

Dmitry Talantov is a well-known lawyer in Izhevsk, Republic of Udmurtia, and the President of the Bar Association of the Republic of Udmurtia. One of his clients is Ivan Safronov, a former journalist who has been under arrest since July 2020 on high treason charges. Amnesty International has found his case to be marred by undue pressure and coercion against his lawyers, and likely to have been politically motivated.³³

Dmitry Talantov is being prosecuted for a Facebook post in which he criticized Russia’s invasion of Ukraine. He was arrested on 28 June in Izhevsk and transported to Moscow the same day. On 29 June, a court ruled that Dmitry Talantov be placed in pretrial detention.³⁴ In the pretrial detention centre, the 61-year-old lawyer was reportedly not provided with a bed and had to spend several nights sitting on a bench.³⁵

CONCLUSION

Amnesty International concludes that all of the above-mentioned individuals – Aleksey Gorinov, Ilya Yashin, Marina Ovsyannikova, Viktoria Petrova, Maria Ponomarenko, Dmitry Ivanov, Ioann Kurmoyarov, Aleksandra Skochilenko, Vladimir Kara-Murza and Dmitry Talantov – are prisoners of conscience who are being prosecuted solely for the peaceful exercise of their right to freedom of expression. They must be immediately and unconditionally released, and the criminal charges against them dropped.

Furthermore, Amnesty International calls on the Russian authorities to:

1. Repeal Article 207.3 of the Criminal Code as incompatible with Russia’s obligations under international human rights law.
2. Repeal other such legislation that unduly restricts the exercise of the right to freedom of expression through criminal offences such as “dissemination of false information”, “discreditation of state bodies”, “calls for introduction of sanctions”, “offending religious feelings”, “participation in activities of an undesirable organization”, etc.
3. Pending these changes to legislation, immediately stop prosecuting individuals for peacefully exercising their rights to freedom of expression, which does not constitute a recognizable offence according to international legal standards.
4. Immediately and unconditionally release all individuals detained for peacefully exercising their right to freedom of expression, and ensure that they receive full and fair reparations.
5. End the use of punitive psychiatry, and of involuntary psychiatric treatment which can amount to torture or other ill-treatment, and bring to account all those suspected of criminal responsibility for such practices.
6. Ensure the right of everyone to freely express their opinion and impart information, including about the war in Ukraine.

³² See, for example, Amnesty International, “Russia: Opposition activist sentenced to four years in prison under repressive ‘undesirable organization’ law”, 15 July 2022, [amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2022/07/russia-opposition-activist-sentenced-to-four-years-in-prison-under-repressive-undesirable-organization-law](https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2022/07/russia-opposition-activist-sentenced-to-four-years-in-prison-under-repressive-undesirable-organization-law)

³³ Amnesty International, “Russian Federation: in the Absence of a Fair Trial Release Ivan Safronov Immediately”, 8 April 2022, [amnesty.org/en/documents/eur46/5466/2022/en](https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/eur46/5466/2022/en)

³⁴ See also: Amnesty International, “Russia: Release prisoner of conscience Dmitry Talantov”, 4 July 2022, [amnesty.org/en/documents/eur46/5801/2022/en](https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/eur46/5801/2022/en)

³⁵ Berman Daniil, Facebook post, 13 July 2022,

[facebook.com/bermandaniil/posts/pfbid02RnjFWmieYWM3D8T8RYqjYnqkGN9g1fV5g6kAXQscft5PgMyrmRedPqjuyT1e1ShUI](https://www.facebook.com/bermandaniil/posts/pfbid02RnjFWmieYWM3D8T8RYqjYnqkGN9g1fV5g6kAXQscft5PgMyrmRedPqjuyT1e1ShUI)