

3.4. Journalists

3.4. Journalists

Since February 2022, authorities have intensified the suppression of independent journalism through a wide range of legislative tools.372 These include ‘war censorship’ laws, anti-terrorism and anti-extremism legislation, as well as criminal prosecution for non-compliance with a ‘foreign agent’ obligations and participation in ‘undesirable organisations.’373 State-imposed pressure led to the closure of many independent media outlets, the loss of funding374 and the exile of hundreds of journalists.375 In its 2025 Index, RSF ranked Russia 171st out of 180 countries, down from 162nd place in 2024, noting that nearly all independent media in Russia are either banned, blocked, or labelled as ‘foreign agents’ or ‘undesirable organisations’, while those that remain work under ‘military censorship.’376

Journalists face arrests, surveillance, and threats to the safety of their families as well as the need to navigate ‘the shifting boundaries of state censorship.’377 Between 24 February 2022 and 24 July 2025, OVD-Info documented 1 386 instances of ‘pressure on journalists and media workers,’ comprising blocking, closure, or deprivation of registration, legal prosecution, police searches, detention and arrests, threats, and physical violence.378

As of 31 October 2025, RSF Barometer recorded 49 journalists and media workers in detention in Russia.379 Among them, as of 29 September 2025, were 26 Ukrainian journalists.380 The UN Special Rapporteur, Mariana Katzarova, noted that between July 2024 and July 2025, based on data from the Mass Media Defence Centre, 42 Russian journalists were sentenced to prison terms of up to 12 years. Furthermore, new criminal cases were initiated against 89 journalists, compared to 23 in 2023.381 In September 2024, Ukrainian journalist Viktoria Roschina died in detention in Russia,382 after going missing in August 2023 while reporting from the occupied Zaporizhzhia region,383 with reports indicating signs of torture.384

- 372

  RSF, Russia, n.d., url; OVD-Info, Prosecution for anti-war views, 24 July 2025, url

- 373

  UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in the Russian Federation, Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Russian Federation, Mariana Katzarova,15 September 2025, url, para. 32; CPJ, Russia's repression record, 21 October 2025, url

- 374

  Freedom House, Freedom in the World, 28 February 2025, url

- 375

  CPJ, Russia's repression record, 21 October 2025, url

- 376

  RSF, Russia, n.d., url

- 377

  Meduza, ‘There’s no such thing as safety.’ In Russia journalists must either adapt to censorship or risk their freedom. So why do they keep reporting?, 29 May 2025, url

- 378

  OVD-Info, Prosecution for anti-war views, 24 July 2025, url

- 379

  RSF, Barometer, [detained, Russia, 2025 – 2025, Ongoing], url, accessed 31 October 2025

- 380

  RSF, Ukraine: the media professionals arbitrary detained by Russia, 26 September 2025, url

- 381

  UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in the Russian Federation, Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Russian Federation, Mariana Katzarova,15 September 2025, url, para. 32

- 382

  Guardian (The), ‘Numerous signs of torture’: a Ukrainian journalists’ detention and death in Russian prison, 29 April 2025, url; CPJ, Victoria Roshchina, n.d., url

- 383

  UN OHCHR, Report on the Human Rights Situation in Ukraine, 1 September – 30 November 2024, url, para. 62

- 384

  Guardian (The), ‘Numerous signs of torture’: a Ukrainian journalists’ detention and death in Russian prison, 29 April 2025, url; CPJ, Victoria Roshchina, n.d., url

© European Union Agency for Asylum 2026 | Email: info@euaa.europa.eu