

Russia's Political Prisoner Numbers on the Rise, Says Memorial Rights Group

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Stanislav Krasilnikov / TASS

More than 100 Russians are being held in prisons on politically motivated charges, [according](#) to a new list compiled by the Memorial rights group.

Memorial publishes the list every Oct. 30 to coincide with the Day of Remembrance for Victims of Political Repression commemorated since the fall of the Soviet Union.

Millions are believed to have died during the repressive Soviet period, which reached its pinnacle with the mass killings and imprisonments of the late 1930s under Josef Stalin.

This year the report said there were 117 political prisoners in Russia, which is 15 more than last year.

“The real number of political prisoners and persons deprived of their freedom for political reasons, in today’s Russia, is undoubtedly much larger,” the NGO said in an English-language statement.

Since the publication of Memorial's previous list, 45 people have been included and 28 removed after either serving full prison terms or being released.

The victims of political repression include Yury Dmitriev, the head of Memorial's branch in the northern republic of Karelia. Dmitriev [faces](#) up to 15 years behind bars for allegedly involving his adoptive daughter in producing pornographic materials.

Memorial called for the release of the 117 prisoners, 25 of whom were added to the list for religious persecution. "There should be no political prisoners in Russia," Memorial said.

The Russian government [labeled](#) the human rights group a "foreign agent" last October in response to its criticism of the foreign agent law as politically oppressive.

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