

Forgetting the Purges, Official Claims Russia Has 'Never' Targeted Dissidents

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Sergei Nosov / Kremlin.ru

A regional official raised eyebrows this week when he claimed that Russia has never cracked down on dissidents in its violence-prone history.

“I note that we’ve never, even in the days of tsarist Russia, killed people for dissent,” Magadan governor Sergei Nosov told the self-described nationalist [zavtra.ru](#) outlet in an [interview](#) published Wednesday.

“That, by the way, is the strength of our people,” Nosov added.

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Nosov’s own region in Russia’s Far East, more than 10,000 kilometers from Moscow, [reportedly](#) held 740,000 prisoners from across the Soviet Union between 1932 and 1953.

According to official prison [records](#), 130,000 of those died and another 10,000 were shot and killed during the period.

Conservative estimates say nearly 700,000 people were executed in Stalin's Great Terror of 1937-38. The Memorial human rights group keeps a [database](#) tallying some three million victims of Soviet repression.

Memorial [estimates](#) there were 54 political prisoners in Russia as of Oct. 30, 2018, the Day of Remembrance for Victims of Political Repression commemorated since the fall of the Soviet Union.

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