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Popular Russian Political Blogger ‘Stalingulag’ Reveals His Identity

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BBC Russian / YouTube

The author of a popular anonymous political blog in Russia has revealed his identity as a financial trader with a neuromuscular disorder from the North Caucasus, confirming previous media investigations.

Stalingulag has entertained his readers with frank and vulgar commentary on current events in Russia on the Telegram messaging service since 2016. His writing style has earned him top readership across Russian social media, and opposition leader Alexei Navalny in 2017 referred to Stalingulag as Russia's "leading political columnist."

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Last year, the RBC news website traced the Stalingulag account to Alexander Gorbunov from Makhachkala, republic of Dagestan. Stalingulag initially denied links to Gorbunov in his trademark writing style.

The years-long shroud of secrecy was lifted on Thursday when Alexander Gorbunov identified himself as the author of Stalingulag to the BBC Russian service.

Gorbunov, who uses a wheelchair because of spinal muscular atrophy, came forward a week after police raided his parents' home in Makhachkala over suspected phone bombers.

"There are situations when it's simply impossible to be silent, impossible not to say that crazy things are happening," Gorbunov, 27, said when asked what prompted him to write about Russian politics.

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