

Russian Ex-Official Tries to Sue Stalin, Told There Are 'No Signs of Crime'

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Mikhail Tereschenko / Moskva News Agency

A former top prosecutor in Russia has encountered resistance as he tries to sue Stalin over orders to execute over 80,000 people and send nearly 200,000 to the gulags, Russia's Kommersant business daily has reported.

Ex-prosecutor Igor Stepanov filed a report seeking to launch criminal proceedings against Stalin, citing the Soviet leader's 1937 order to shoot 82,700 "anti-Soviet elements" and send 193,400 to labor camps. According to Kommersant, Stepanov alleges that Stalin should be found guilty of "genocide of Orthodox priests and other citizens," including around 20 of his relatives.

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"A decree cannot be a sufficient basis to initiate criminal proceedings," Yevgeny Romanovsky, the Ivanov region's deputy prosecutor, was [quoted](#) by Kommersant as saying.

Regional investigators also refused to open the criminal case, saying Stepanov failed to provide “specific information ... showing signs of a crime.”

Stepanov said his ultimate goal is to obtain a legal assessment of Stalin’s actions, admitting that investigators will refuse to open a criminal case “due to the suspect’s death.”

“There’s currently no legal assessment, that’s why the cult of Stalin remains and monuments to him are erected,” he said.

The ex-prosecutor pointed to the 2009 criminal case [opened](#) in Ukraine against Stalin and other Soviet officials over their role in creating an artificial famine as an example of what he hoped to achieve in Russia.

“I want, like in Ukraine, for Stalin’s crime to be confirmed,” Stepanov said.

Stepanov lost another anti-Stalin case in December, when his attempts to rebut Federal Security Service (FSB) chief Alexander Bortnikov’s interview appearing to excuse Stalin’s purges were struck down in court.

The Soviet Union repudiated Stalin after his death in 1953. Though blamed for millions of deaths from purges and collectivized farm policies, many Russians still [laud](#) the Soviet dictator for the country’s victory in World War II.

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