The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

‘Pro-Western’ Activists Posing as Journalists Are Infiltrating Russia’s Military, Defense Minister Claims

March 25, 2020



Speaking to Russia’s upper chamber of parliament, Shoigu urged lawmakers to change the nation's mass media law to counter so-called “information attacks.” **Anvar Galeyev / TASS**

Members of a “pro-Western opposition division” in Russia are posing as journalists to “hide behind” the country’s mass media law and infiltrate its military facilities, Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu said Wednesday.

Speaking to Russia’s upper chamber of parliament, Shoigu urged lawmakers to change the nation's mass media law to counter so-called “information attacks.”

Related article: Russian Journalist Charged With 'Justifying Terrorism' After Critical Comments

"[These activists] are working to infiltrate military installations and hunt for relatives and

witnesses," the Defense Ministry's Zvezda news channel quoted him as saying. "[They] go into hospitals where our wounded and sick are treated, to cemeteries and funerals, to the families of our fallen boys. They take photos of the entrances and exits of our secret facilities and post them online."

The defense minister didn't specify which journalists or news organizations he was referring to, but called for stricter regulations to crack down on the problem.

Earlier this week, the state-run Rossia 24 broadcaster aired a report about Svetlana Prokopyeva, a journalist from the northwestern Russian city of Pskov who faces up to seven years in prison for an October 2018 column on a suicide bombing outside the security services headquarters in the city of Arkhangelsk.

Rossia 24 said Prokopyeva could be also charged with espionage over footage she recorded of an alleged military base near Pskov for the U.S.-funded RFE/RL news outlet's Russian service.

Last year, Russia passed laws that enable the authorities to label individual journalists and bloggers as "foreign agents" and make it a crime to spread "fake news" online.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2020/03/25/pro-western-activists-posing-as-journalists-are-infiltrating-russias-military-defense-minister-claims-a69747