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Russian Independent News Site Shuts Down After Editor's Self-Immolation Death

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Irina Slavina was editor-in-chief of Koza Press in Nizhny Novgorod. **Mikhail Solunin / TASS**

An independent Russian news website has shut down four months after its editor died from setting herself on fire outside the city of Nizhny Novgorod's police headquarters.

Irina Slavina, editor-in-chief of Koza Press, died on Oct. 2, the day after security forces raided her home in search of evidence of her ties to the opposition. In her final social media post she wrote: "Blame the Russian Federation for my death."

Koza Press, the outlet she founded and ran, will now be shut down, Slavina's daughter Margarita Murakhtaeva wrote Wednesday in a Facebook post.

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"It isn't an easy decision, but I believe it's the only correct one: to let go of Koza. I know that

my decision will come as a complete surprise to many," wrote Murakhtaeva, who had taken over as editor following her mother's death by suicide.

"I want to say a huge thank you to everyone who supported Koza during these very difficult four months," she added.

Koza Press covered local politics and corruption in Nizhny Novgorod, a city 400 kilometers east of Moscow. Prior to her death, Slavina had run the outlet single-handedly.

Slavina's death provoked an outpouring of sympathy from fellow journalists as well as condemnation of the authorities. She was hailed as a "fearlessly critical" reporter whose death was described by one former colleague as "the highest act of self-sacrifice," aimed at bringing attention to the authorities' treatment of independent journalists.

Russian investigators have rejected calls from activists and journalists to open a criminal investigation into the circumstances leading up to her death.

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