

Russian Student Journalists Face Jail Over Navalny Protest Video

April 14, 2021



DOXA magazine editors from left, Armen Aramyan, Natalya Tyshevich and Alla Gutnikova wait for a court session. **AP / TASS**

Russian police have raided independent student news site DOXA's Moscow offices and charged its editors with inciting minors to illegally protest, the outlet [said](#) Wednesday.

Russian authorities demanded earlier this year that DOXA take down its video explaining that students shouldn't be afraid to voice their opinions at a Jan. 23 pro-Navalny protest and that it was unlawful for universities to expel students who attend. DOXA said it had deleted the video at the authorities' request and maintains that it contained no calls to illegal activity.

Four DOXA editors now face up to three years in prison on the [charges](#) of "inciting minors to participate in illegal activities."

Embed:

Поддерживающие обвиняемых люди выстроились в цепь солидарности вокруг суда

Видео: Протестный МГУ pic.twitter.com/HVCME6Q8eP

— Медиазона (@mediazzzona) [April 14, 2021](#)

“Today at 6 a.m. [security officers] carried out searches at the DOXA office and the homes of editors Armen Aramyan, Vladimir Metelkin, Alla Gutnikova and Natasha Tyshkevich,” the outlet [said](#) on its website.

The four editors were then charged after being taken in for questioning by investigators.

According to human rights lawyer Pavel Chikov, their charges [fall under](#) the same case opened against top Navalny aide Leonid Volkov, who was charged in absentia as he is based in Lithuania.

On Wednesday afternoon, dozens of supporters, mostly young people, gathered outside Moscow's Basmany District Court, where the editors were due to be sentenced to pre-trial restraints.

“I came here to support Natasha [Tyshkevich],” Anna, 26, told The Moscow Times. “I believe the whole case has been fabricated and politically motivated. I also believe that journalistic activities should not succumb to political repressions.”

Leonid, 22, chief editor of the city of Kazan's first independent student-run outlet, said he came to show his support and solidarity with DOXA, who he said set an example for university students nationwide.

“Unfortunately in Russia, everything is arranged so that there are five or six truly independent student publications. There are many of them in general, but very few are willing to criticize the academic community,” he said.

A Moscow court late Wednesday [ordered](#) the four journalists to follow restrictions including a ban on phone and internet communications and leaving their homes from 00:00 to 23:59, the Mediazona news website reported. Metelkin [called](#) the measures “essentially house arrest.”

DOXA [said](#) in a statement that it will “continue to cover things that are important for young people, and we will continue to stand up for their rights.”

“The pressure that the journalistic community has faced lately is unprecedented, but we will not stop our activities,” the statement said.

Related article: [Raided Investigative Journalist Says Russian Independent Media Is Under Threat](#)

Social media platforms including TikTok and Twitter have been fined millions of rubles for

leaving up calls to protest in jailed Kremlin critic Navalny's support that Russia has likened to [incitement of minors to participate in illegal acts and foreign interference](#).

This year's wave of pro-Navalny protests led to more than 10,000 detentions, dozens of criminal cases against protesters and widespread claims of police violence.

DOXA, which was founded in 2017, was stripped of its official status as a student organization in 2019 after Moscow's elite Higher School of Economics university [cracked down](#) on political activism in the wake of that year's opposition protests.

The searches by security officers are at least the second raids targeting Russian journalists in the past week. Authorities last Friday searched the home of prominent investigative journalist Roman Anin for seven hours in a move he believes is a [warning shot to independent media](#) of a renewed clampdown.

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