

Prominent Academics, Media Figures Show Support for Raided Russian Journalists

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DOXA editor Vladimir Metelkin outside of a court hearing Wednesday. **Vladimir Gerdo / TASS**

Nearly 300 international academics and a popular Russian YouTuber have expressed solidarity with Russian journalists recently subjected to police raids amid widening pressure on independent media.

The letters of support and calls for donations came after four editors of independent student news site DOXA were charged with criminal incitement of youth and investigative journalist Roman Anin was questioned as a witness in an invasion of privacy investigation.

Related article: [Russian Student Journalists Face Jail Over Navalny Protest Video](#)

Some 271 academics [signed](#) an open letter calling the charges against DOXA editors Armen Aramyan, Vladimir Metelkin, Alla Gutnikova and Natasha Tyshekvich “preposterous.” The

journalists face up to three years in prison for a video saying students had the legal right to attend pro-Navalny protests, which they had deleted earlier this year at the authorities' request.

"The purpose of the charges were made clear by the judge — to silence critics," the academics, including gender theorist Judith Butler and Slovenian philosopher Slavoj Žižek, wrote.

"Only one who uses education to manufacture obedience outlaws critical thinking as self-harm," the letter added.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters Thursday that DOXA "began as a student publication but for some time had taken [on social-political character](#)." He declined to comment further on an ongoing investigation.

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

Support for the DOXA editors and Anin also came from YouTuber Yury Dud, who regularly speaks on political matters to the millions of followers who tune into his documentaries and sit-downs with Russian pop culture figures.

Quoting another journalist who was last year [found guilty](#) of "justifying terrorism" over her column about a bombing attack targeting the regional Federal Security Service (FSB) office, Dud [compared](#) journalists to street cleaners.

"They sweep the street and cracks become visible on the asphalt," Dud wrote on Instagram. "The [cracks] were invisible under the sand. Their [cleaners'] job is to sweep the street, our job is to spread the word."

"Now imagine what happens if absolutely everyone stopped noticing the garbage surrounding us. At some point, it will turn into mountains and everything will turn into a fetid and uninhabitable garbage dump."

Critics have decried the latest raids and arrests, alongside an anticipated treason trial against ex-journalist Ivan Safronov and multimillion-ruble fines against U.S.-funded Radio Liberty/Radio Free Europe, as a renewed crackdown on free speech ahead of key parliamentary elections this fall.

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