

Russia Adds Founder of Prisoners' Rights NGO to Wanted List

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Vladimir Osechkin has lived in France since 2015. [facebook.com / vladimir.osechkin](https://facebook.com/vladimir.osechkin)

Russia has added the founder of a prominent prisoners' rights NGO that has leaked video of alleged widespread prison torture to its wanted list for a second time, the activist [said](#) Friday.

Gulagu.net founder Vladimir Osechkin, who has lived in France since 2015, was added to Russia's wanted list two days after the NGO [published](#) a new batch of videos showing graphic torture and rape of inmates at a Saratov region prison hospital.

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The Interior Ministry's database says Osechkin was added to the wanted list "again" because he is "wanted under a Criminal Code article," Interfax [reported](#) Friday. It was not specified which crime he is accused of.

In a Telegram post Friday, Osechkin claimed that the move was politically motivated in

response to Gulagu.net's publishing of prison torture videos.

"I responsibly declare that I have never stolen anything from anyone and, Gulagu.net has acted within the legal framework when exposing corruption and torture," Osechkin said in a post.

In July 2020, Osechkin was reportedly [arrested](#) in absentia on fraud charges. The *Kommersant* business daily [reported](#) that Osechkin was accused of distributing fake insurance policies to prisoners' relatives from 2015-2019.

The Saratov prison hospital videos released this week are the second batch of a trove of footage documenting alleged systemic torture at prisons across the country. Gulagu.net obtained the videos from former inmate Sergei Savelyev, a Belarusian citizen who smuggled them out of prison on a USB stick.

Five criminal cases have been initiated and 18 Saratov regional prison employees have been sacked following an internal review over the publication of the videos, the regional prison service said Thursday.

Gulagu.net has also claimed that the Saratov region hospital was overseen by senior regional Federal Security Service (FSB) and Federal Prison Service (FSIN) officers, who had allegedly coordinated the actions with federal officials.

"We understand that the special services were sent to Saratov and those who were involved in the Krasnoyarsk torture conveyor 'to resolve the issue' and to conceal the topic of torture as well as to fabricate some ordered cases against us," Osechkin said in his Telegram post.

Last month, Russian prosecutors launched a criminal case against Savelyev for leaking the videos. However, the charges were later dropped and Savelyev's name was [removed](#) from the wanted list this week.

Both Savelyev and Osechkin have claimed political asylum in France.

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