

Russia's Oldest University to Expel Students Detained at Anti-War Protests – Kommersant

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Law enforcement officers detain a protestor at an anti-war protest St. Petersburg. **Valentin Yegorshin / TASS**

One of Russia's oldest universities will expel at least 13 students who were detained at the anti-war protests that have erupted across the country in recent weeks, the Kommersant business daily [reported](#) Wednesday.

The prestigious St. Petersburg State University is reportedly expected to draft more expulsion orders for students after protests against Russia's invasion of Ukraine continued into this week.

"I won't get your hopes up, these students are doomed," Mikhail Mochalov, chairman of the university's student council, was quoted as saying in a student chat room Sunday.

Mochalov said the university's vice rector is allegedly citing an unknown Interior Ministry

letter as an “indisputable basis” for the students’ expulsion.

Vice-rector Alexander Babich’s statement dated March 2 [says](#) students can be expelled if they are found guilty of violating Russia’s increasingly restrictive protest laws.

One of the students reportedly targeted for expulsion is Veronica Samusik, who covered the rallies as a journalist for the online publication Sota.Vision.

The university did not indicate whether the fact that Samusik was on assignment wearing a “Press” vest and carrying a press card would affect its decision to expel her, Kommersant reported.

Lawyer Anastasia Burakova called the students’ planned expulsions a “direct violation of the presumption of innocence.”

“This is a purely repressive mechanism,” Kommersant quoted Burakova as saying.

Nearly 14,000 anti-war protesters have been detained since President Vladimir Putin ordered an unprovoked invasion of Ukraine nearly two weeks ago on Feb. 24.

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