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Russian Journalist Probed Over 'False' Ukraine Shelling Report

By AFP

March 22, 2022

Russian officials accuse journalist of spreading false information about conflict in Ukraine. **Alexander Nevzorov / YouTube (CC BY 3.0)**

Russian investigators said Tuesday they had launched a criminal case against a popular journalist for alleging that Moscow's army deliberately shelled a maternity hospital in Ukraine's embattled city of Mariupol.

Alexander Nevzorov is the first prominent political reporter and commentator to be probed for spreading "false" information about the Russian army under new legislation introduced after President Vladimir Putin sent troops to Ukraine on February 24.

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The Investigative Committee's announcement came on the 27th day of what Moscow calls its

"special military operation" in pro-Western Ukraine, which has claimed thousands of lives and displaced some 10 million people.

"Nevzorov published deliberately false information about the deliberate shelling by Russia's armed forces of a maternity hospital in the city of Mariupol," a statement said.

"The publications were accompanied by inaccurate photographs of civilians affected by the shelling," investigators said, adding that the pictures had been first published by Ukrainian media.

Investigators also said they were seeking to establish Nevzorov's whereabouts.

Nevzorov, 63, is a veteran Russian journalist and a former member of parliament.

He is believed to be residing outside Russia.

Last week, investigators also opened a criminal case against Veronika Belotserkovskaya, a Russian blogger and publisher who lives in France, over spreading "false" information that Russian armed forces were targeting Ukrainian civilians including children.

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