

Russia Arrests Anti-War Opposition Activist Ilya Yashin

July 13, 2022



Ilya Yashin in court. **Vladimir Gerdo / TASS**

A court in Moscow arrested opposition activist and former municipal deputy Ilya Yashin on Wednesday after he was charged with spreading false information about the Russian Armed Forces.

Yashin, 39, will stay in prison until at least Sept. 12.

“This case is politically motivated from first to last,” Yashin, who denies the charges, said in court, independent media outlet Sota [reported](#).

The Russian authorities have cracked down on anti-war protests since the invasion of Ukraine, with more than 16,000 people detained for anti-war statements and dozens of criminal cases opened, [according](#) to human rights organization OVD-Info.

Yashin is accused under new censorship laws that criminalize anti-war protests and the charges relate to an April YouTube video in which he mentioned the "murder of civilians in

Bucha, " a suburb of the Ukrainian capital where the Russian army has been accused of war crimes.

If found guilty, Yashin could face up to 15 years behind bars.

The judge in the case, Natalya Dudar, closed the hearing about Yashin's arrest to journalists and spectators, in order to avoid the exposure of what she said were "state secrets", independent outlet Mediazona reported.

Hundreds of journalists and opposition activists turned up outside the courtroom to support the opposition activist, including Marina Ovsyannikova, the state television producer who [staged](#) a March protest live on air.

Police made several arrests, according to media reports.

The criminal case against Yashin was opened Tuesday, a day before he was due to be released from a [15-day jail sentence](#) for disobeying police orders.

Police officers searched Yashin's Moscow apartment Tuesday evening, Yashin's lawyer Vadim Prokhorov [said](#) on Facebook.

Yashin's detention was condemned Wednesday by human rights organization Amnesty International.

"The shameful criminalization of freedom of expression must stop," said Marie Struthers, Amnesty International's Director for Eastern Europe and Central Asia, in an emailed statement.

Before his detention, Yashin was one of the last prominent Russian opposition leaders to remain at liberty inside the country.

Kremlin critic Vladimir Kara-Murza, was [charged](#) with "discrediting" the Russian army in April and has since been under arrest. Municipal deputy Alexei Gorinov, was last week [sentenced](#) to 7 years in prison for voicing opposition to the war. Many others have fled abroad.

A prominent supporter of jailed Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny, Yashin was head of Krasnoselsky district council in Moscow between 2017 and 2021 and runs a YouTube channel with over 1.3 million subscribers.

Original url:

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