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Russia Records 20,000 Political Detentions in 2022 – Watchdog

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A detention at an anti-mobilization protest in Moscow. **van Vodopyanov / Kommersant**

Russia detained at least 20,467 people for political reasons in 2022, according to end-of-year statistics published last week by OVD-Info, one of Russia's leading independent human rights watchdogs.

At least 19,478 of those were detained for speaking out against Russia's invasion of neighboring Ukraine. Other detentions occured at ecological and workers' rights protests and protests against a November law banning "LGBT propaganda."

Women accounted for nearly 45% of all those detained for expressing an anti-war position, according to the watchdog.

Russia passed a total of 22 new repressive laws in 2022, and there were just 29 days of the year in which instances of political persecution weren't recorded, OVD-Info said.

In addition to arrests and detentions, the Russian authorities have also looked to crack down

on dissent by labeling 176 organizations and individuals as "foreign agents" — a Soviet-era term implying espionage — and recognizing 22 entities as "undesirable" — a label that can lead to criminal prosecution.

More than 210,000 sources of independent online information were blocked by Russia in 2022, according to OVD-Info.

The watchdog also recorded at least 17 instances of extra-judicial persecution of Russian journalists, including an April attack on Nobel Peace Prize winner Dmitry Muratov, the editor-in-chief of independent news outlet Novaya Gazeta.

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