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Russia Places Moldovan TikToker On Wanted List

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vk.com/nekogow

The Russian authorities have placed popular blogger Nikolai Lebedev, who is more widely known by his TikTok handle Nekoglai, on its wanted person list.

Though Russia's Interior Ministry didn't specify the criminal offense Lebedev is suspected of, his appearance on the list comes just days after the authorities opened a criminal libel case against him.

Lebedev, who has over 10 million followers on TikTok, was arrested in Moscow in November shortly after posting a parody clip mocking a viral video that showed a Russian soldier in a trench nonchalantly throwing away grenades dropped on him from a Ukrainian helicopter.

The blogger, a citizen of Moldova, was subsequently charged with violating Russian migration law and deported to Moldova.

Lebedev later revealed that he had been subjected to torture and sexualized violence by

Russian law enforcement while being detained. He also said that he had been forced to record a video apologizing for his parodies.

The TikToker's initial arrest followed a campaign against him for his disrespectful attitude toward Russian soldiers in Ukraine that was led by Yekaterina Mizulina, head of the Kremlin-aligned Free Internet League, a pressure group advocating stricter rules on what can be said and done online.

The new case may well also be linked to Mizulina, who wrote that the criminal libel case against Lebedev had been opened "in connection with the spread of outright lies and slander" about her and the death threats she alleges she subsequently received.

"The goal of the threats and spreading deliberately false information is to put pressure on me as a public figure due to my position on the discreditation of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation by a number of representatives of the blogging community," Mizulina wrote on Telegram last week.

Neither Lebedev nor the Moldovan authorities have commented on the news.

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