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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Anti-War Russians Detained at Muted Anniversary Protests

February 24, 2023



Police detain a man after he laid flowers at a statue of Ukrainian national poet Taras Shevchenko in St. Petersburg. **Olga Maltseva / AFP**

Dozens of Russians have been detained for staging anti-war pickets and other acts of remembrance across the country, as Feb. 24 marks exactly one year since the Kremlin's full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

Mass anti-war protests are effectively outlawed under legislation passed in the wake of the invasion last year, and most prominent opposition activists have fled abroad in fear of being prosecuted.

In Moscow, police detained at least four activists at the statue of Ukrainian poet Lesya Ukrainka, the independent police-monitoring group OVD-Info said.

Police in Russia's second-largest city St. Petersburg detained seven activists who had come to lay flowers at the statue of Ukrainian national poet Taras Shevchenko.

Anti-war activist Yelena Osipova, a 77-year-old pensioner, was detained while staging a solo picket with signs reading "No to war" and "Putin is war" in front of St. Petersburg's Kazan Cathedral.

Embed:

> «У меня ни одной родины больше не осталось». Девушка заплакала у памятника Лесе Украинке. Она объяснила, почему не побоялась возложить цветы к мемориалу в Москве, несмотря на риск задержания. pic.twitter.com/v5M7xnn9Gm
>
> — SOTA (@Sota_Vision) February 24, 2023

An activist staging a solo picket with a sign reading "Do not fight" was briefly detained in the Far East port of Vladivostok, OVD-Info reported.

Similarly, police detained a woman in the Siberian city of Irkutsk who held up a placard that read "I demand the withdrawal of Russian troops from Ukraine!"

In the Nizhny Novgorod region east of Moscow, Dmitry Mochalin, a municipal deputy in the town of Vyksa, was also detained for his anti-war picket.

At least seven people were detained near the memorial to victims of political repression in the Urals city of Yekaterinburg, four of whom were later released.

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In the Far East city of Khabarovsk police also briefly detained local activist Nikolai Zodchy, who staged a picket with a banner showing photographs of President Vladimir Putin.

In Murmansk, Tomsk and Kazan, local activists organized makeshift displays of flowers, stuffed toys and ribbons in the blue-and-yellow colors of the Ukrainian flag.

In the Leningrad region, activist Dmitry Skurikhin painted the walls of his store in the village of Russko-Vysotskoe with anti-war slogans.

In total, almost 20,000 people have been detained across Russia since the start of the invasion one year ago, according to OVD-Info.

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