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Russian Politician Katz Arrested in Absentia for Spreading 'Fake' News About Ukraine

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Maxim Katz **Maxim Tinkov / flickr (CC BY-SA 2.0)**

Russian politician Maxim Katz has been arrested in absentia on charges of spreading "fake news" about the Russian Armed Forces, the independent Mediazona news website reported Thursday.

Katz, 38, is well-known for his YouTube channel, where he discusses and criticizes Russia's military actions in Ukraine to his more than 1.7 million subscribers.

In October, Russia's Interior Ministry placed Katz, who had left Russia by that time, on the federal wanted list.

A Moscow court ordered his arrest in absentia on Thursday, Mediazona reported, citing the court database.

He risks up to three years in prison if he returns to Russia.

Shortly after it invaded Ukraine in February 2022, Russia criminalized the spread of information about Russia's military or the war that differed from the Kremlin’s narrative.

The law also introduced jail terms of up to 15 years for the publication of "knowingly false information" about the Russian military.

Many critics of Moscow's invasion have been arrested and jailed, including prominent opposition politician Vladimir Kara-Murza and artist Alexandra Skochilenko.

In total, Russian authorities have opened at least 480 criminal cases against critics of the war, according to the independent police monitor OVD-Info.

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