

Putin Pardons Killer in High-Profile Domestic Violence Case, Activist Says

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Vladislav Kanyus at Kemerovo's Leninsky District Court in 2021. **Maria Pimenova / TASS**

Russian President Vladimir Putin has pardoned a man convicted in the murder of his ex-girlfriend after he is believed to have signed up to fight in Ukraine, women's rights activist Alyona Popova [said](#) Wednesday.

Last summer, Vladislav Kanyus was [sentenced](#) to 17 years in a maximum-security prison over the 2020 murder of Vera Pekhteleva in the Siberian city of Kemerovo.

Activist Popova [said](#) prison authorities had confirmed Kanyus' transfer to southern Russia's Rostov region, which borders Ukraine, after Pekhteleva's mother discovered photographs of him dressed in a military uniform and holding a weapon.

Popova posted a letter from the Russian Prosecutor General's Office dated Nov. 3, in which Kanyus was said to have been pardoned and had his conviction expunged by presidential decree on April 27.

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Pekhteleva's father later [said](#) prison bailiffs had informed him that Kanyus was also freed from paying 4 million rubles (\$44,500) in damages to her family, according to Russia's news magazine *Sobesednik*.

"One-and-a-half million for each parent, 1 million to her uncle, and another 200,000 rubles to the state for court-appointed lawyers. The presidential decree also relieved him of these obligations," Pekhteleva's father told the publication.

Putin [said](#) in June that he was "signing pardon decrees" for prisoners fighting in Russia's war against Ukraine, claiming the recidivism rate among them was below 1%.

Days later Putin [signed](#) a law allowing convicts to join the country's military, except for those who have committed serious crimes.

In 2017, Russia decriminalized first-time domestic violence offenses, a move activists argue enables abusers and strengthens the culture of impunity around these crimes.

Efforts to pass new legislation to protect women stalled with the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic in early 2020.

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