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Russia Issues Arrest Warrant for Exiled Newspaper Editor

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Denis Kamalyagin. **Maxim Kuzakhmetov (CC BY-SA 4.0)**

Russia's Interior Ministry on Tuesday issued an arrest warrant for the chief editor of a newspaper in the northwestern Pskov region, just days after banning him from leaving the country despite him having fled Russia over a year ago.

Journalist Denis Kamalyagin, who serves as editor-in-chief of the newspaper Pskovskaya Guberniya, was charged last month under wartime censorship laws that ban "discrediting" Russia's Armed Forces.

Kamalyagin fled to nearby Latvia last March after police searched his home and seized the personal electronic devices of the newspaper's employees at their office in the city of Pskov.

Pskovskaya Gubernia said criminal charges had been pressed against the journalist because of a YouTube where he accuses the Russian military of carrying out a deadly missile strike in central Ukraine earlier this year.

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“I had been ready for this [arrest warrant], a criminal case was opened against me so it was only a matter of time,” Kamalyagin told The Moscow Times in a phone interview, noting that criminal cases and search warrants have become “a normal thing” in Russia.

The journalist also said that the Interior Ministry's arrest warrant incorrectly stated his nationality as Ukrainian.

“I think they made a mistake by looking at my place of birth and stating that I am Ukrainian. However, I am, of course, a Russian citizen. My birth certificate has always been Russian, and the fact that they mixed it up shows their lack of expertise,” he said.

Kamalyagin was one of the first journalists in Russia to be labeled “foreign agent” after authorities expanded legislation in 2020 to allow the designation to apply to individuals in addition to organizations.

Pskovskaya Gubernia was founded by prominent Kremlin critic and politician Lev Shlosberg.

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