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Russia Charges Exiled Opposition Politician With 'War Fakes' – Reports

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Leonid Gozman. **Sergei Savostyanov / TASS**

Russian authorities have charged exiled liberal opposition politician Leonid Gozman with violating the country's wartime censorship laws, the state-run TASS news agency reported Friday, citing an anonymous law enforcement source.

Gozman is reportedly accused of spreading "fake news" about the Russian military's actions in Ukraine.

"He posted distorted statements about the leadership of Russia and the Russian Armed Forces on Facebook and Telegram," TASS quoted its source as saying.

The agency did not specify what he said in the incriminating posts.

The 73-year-old politician, who holds dual Russian-Israeli citizenship, faces up to 10 years in Russian prison if found guilty.

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Gozman has publicly criticized President Vladimir Putin's February 2022 order to invade Ukraine.

He fled Russia in September 2022 after being found guilty of "public comparisons between the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany" in a 2013 blog post.

In July 2022, Gozman was detained for allegedly failing to inform the authorities about his Israeli citizenship. Russia labeled him a "foreign agent" in June 2022.

Russia's Interior Ministry issued at least two arrest warrants for Gozman in August 2022 and October 2023, according to the independent Mediazona news website.

Gozman was the last leader of the small political party Union of Right Forces, which once included members such as free-market reformers Anatoly Chubais and Boris Nemtsov.

Chubais left Russia after the invasion of Ukraine, while Nemtsov was shot dead steps away from the Kremlin in 2015.

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