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Russia Seeks Arrest of Exiled Opposition Politician Bryukhanova

By Leyla Latypova

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Anastasia Brukhanova. **Karina Gradusova (CC BY-SA 2.0)**

Russia has issued an international arrest warrant for opposition politician Anastasia Bryukhanova under its wartime censorship laws, the state-run TASS news agency reported Wednesday.

Authorities opened a criminal case against Bryukhanova, a former Moscow municipal deputy, in April on charges of spreading "fake news" about the Russian army. In July, Moscow's Khoroshevsky district court ruled to arrest Bryukhanova in absentia.

The news of the international arrest warrant "wasn't a surprise," Bryukhanova told The Moscow Times, noting that she learned of the Interior Ministry's warrant by reading the news.

"It won't affect my work. I am in Germany and am following all precautions," she said.

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Bryukhanova confirmed to The Moscow Times that the criminal case against her was connected to her YouTube channel's December 2022 video about The New York Times' investigation into Russian soldiers' massacre of civilians in Bucha, Ukraine. Russian authorities have denied responsibility for the murders, instead claiming that they were staged.

“As I understand, materials about Bucha are the ones that are most frequently used as a pretext for [opening criminal cases] on charges of [spreading] fakes about the Russian army,” said Bryukhanova.

Bryukhanova, 30, served as a Moscow municipal deputy from the liberal Yabloko party from 2016-2021.

After being expelled from the party for factionalism in 2020, Bryukhanova stood in the 2021 election to Russia’s national parliament, the State Duma, as an independent candidate.

Though Bryukhanova was the only independent opposition candidate in the country on the ballot that year, she lost the race in her district to Kremlin-aligned Galina Khovanskaya.

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