

Political Persecution Under Putin Highest Since Stalin Era – Proekt

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Andrei Lyubimov / Moskva News Agency

Russian authorities have prosecuted more than 116,000 activists during President Vladimir Putin's latest term in office, the investigative news outlet Proekt [reported](#), surpassing levels of political repression seen during the rule of Soviet leaders Nikita Khrushchev and Leonid Brezhnev.

Between 2018 and 2023, Russian courts fined 105,000 people for making public statements or attending protests.

Another 11,400 have faced charges under Russia's wartime censorship laws, as well as for extremism and terrorism, treason, espionage and refusing to fight for Ukraine.

According to Proekt, these figures are the highest in Russia since dictator Joseph Stalin was in power, when people were tried for the crimes of "anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda" and the "dissemination of knowingly false fabrications that defame the Soviet state and social system."

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Between 1956 and 1961, 4,883 Soviet citizens were convicted of those two crimes, Proekt notes.

“The modern Russian government is actively using similar methods... as in the Soviet Union, dissenters are dismissed from universities and work, forced out of the country, and those who don’t want to leave are forced to publicly apologize and swear allegiance to the authorities,” the outlet said.

“However, it’s impossible to calculate how many people have gone through this type of repression in practice.”

Among non-activists, Proekt said 600,000 people were fined for disobeying police orders during Putin’s latest term and 159,000 fined for violating Covid restrictions during and after the pandemic.

Putin, 71, is expected to easily win a fifth term in office during the March 15–17 presidential elections with much of the opposition either jailed or in exile.

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