

Russia Adds Theater Director Berkovich, Playwright Petriychuk to 'Terrorists and Extremists' List

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Theater director Yevgeniya Berkovich (left) and playwright Svetlana Petriychuk (right). **Alexander Zemlianichenko / AP / TASS**

Russia's state financial watchdog Rosfinmonitoring on Monday [added](#) theater director Yevgenia (Zhenya) Berkovich and playwright Svetlana Petriychuk to its list of "terrorists and extremists."

Berkovich and Petriychuk were arrested in May 2023 over their award-winning play "Finist the Brave Falcon," which tells the story of Russian women who correspond with Islamist militants, fall in love with them and plan to join them in Syria.

They are accused of "justifying terrorism" and face up to seven years in prison if convicted. Berkovich and Petriychuk, who deny their guilt, will [remain](#) in pre-trial detention at least until May 4.

Berkovich, a mother to two adopted teenage daughters, has repeatedly asked the court to be placed under house arrest, fearing her children might suffer a “psychological breakdown” in her absence, but the requests have been denied.

Related article: [Yevgenia Berkovich's Statement in Verse to the Court is Now an Illustrated Music Video](#)

During a court session, Berkovich stressed that her play received funding from the Culture Ministry. According to her, the [play had](#) "a very simple and transparent idea that dozens of women in our time become, I emphasize, random victims of evil."

"Understanding and justifying why this happens are two different things," she said.

Since Russia launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine, Berkovich has also written emotional poems against the war. Many observers believe her statements against the invasion and [anti-war poetry](#) were the real reasons for the theater director's arrest.

The Russian Volunteer Corps, a paramilitary unit fighting alongside the Ukrainian army against Russian forces, was also added to Rosfinmonitoring's list of "terrorists and extremists" on Monday.

Being added to Russia's lists of “extremists and terrorists” allows the authorities to freeze designees’ bank accounts without a court order.

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