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Russia Arrests Reporter Over Bucha Posts

By AFP

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Sergei Mingazov. **sergeimingazov / instagram**

Russia has arrested a journalist from the Russian edition of Forbes magazine for social media reposts over accusations of Russian atrocities in the Ukrainian town of Bucha, his lawyer and Forbes said on Friday.

Rights groups say hundreds of Russians have been arrested, fined and jailed for criticizing Russia's offensive on Ukraine under tough military censorship laws.

Russian authorities have particularly targeted people for comments on Bucha, the Kyiv suburb where Russian troops have been accused of massacring civilians.

Moscow has rejected those charges and accused Kyiv and the West of staging the scenes of dead civilians and testimonies of torture.

"Sergei Mingazov was detained and is being held in a temporary detention center" in the Far East city of Khabarovsk, the journalist's lawyer Konstantin Bubon said in a Facebook post.

He faces up to 10 years in prison under charges of spreading "false information," Bubon said.

"In short, for reposting a publication about the events in Bucha" on a Telegram channel, he added.

His Telegram channel, which has around 430 followers, features a number of reposts from April 2022 that allege Russian troops killed civilians in Bucha.

Russian forces controlled the Kyiv suburb for a month at the start of the campaign.

Pictures of dead civilians found on the streets made front pages around the world, triggering outrage in the West.

Forbes Russia said Friday it had not been able to contact Mingazov.

A Russian reporter was last month sentenced to seven years in jail for articles on alleged Russian war crimes, including at Bucha.

And opposition politician Ilya Yashin is serving 8.5 years in jail on similar charges after discussing the claims in a YouTube video.

Moscow has outlawed criticism of its offensive and has made independent reporting on the campaign effectively illegal.

Numerous foreign and Russian reporters have left the country over the last two years under fear of arrest.

The Reporters Without Borders advocacy group said Russia arrested 34 journalists during 2023.

They included Wall Street Journal reporter Evan Gershkovich, a U.S. citizen, and joint U.S.-Russian citizen Alsu Kurmasheva — both of whom are still in pre-trial detention.

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