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Russia Issues Arrest Warrant for Exiled Journalist Andrei Zakharov

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Andrei Zakharov. **Avz1983**

Authorities in Russia have issued an arrest warrant for exiled investigative journalist Andrei Zakharov, the independent news website Mediazona reported Wednesday, citing the Interior Ministry's database of wanted persons.

The database does not specify what criminal charges Zakharov faces, but Mediazona noted that he was previously charged with failing to comply with Russia's "foreign agent" labeling rules.

Zakharov, who lives in Bulgaria, told The Moscow Times that he had been "awaiting" a warrant for his arrest, but added that he would "continue to live life just as before."

Russia's Justice Ministry added the journalist to its registry of "foreign agents" in October 2021. In December of that same year, Zakharov left Russia over "unprecedented surveillance" following his designation.

“Foreign agents” face criminal charges for failing to comply with the legal requirements of the label, which carries a negative Soviet-era stigma. These requirements include submitting regular financial reports and detailed lists of income and spending, as well as prominently displaying a disclaimer on all articles, social media posts and other publications.

News of the criminal case against Zakharov first emerged in April when police searched the homes of his former colleagues in St. Petersburg.

Zakharov previously worked for the St. Petersburg-based news website Fontanka, RBC, BBC Russia and the investigative website Proekt throughout his journalistic career.

He broke the story of President Vladimir Putin’s alleged ex-mistress and their purported extramarital daughter late last year. Zakharov also reported on Russian meddling in the 2016 U.S. presidential elections and more recently investigated the Russia-based hacking collective Evil Corp.

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