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Russia Opens 10K Cases for 'Discrediting' Army Since Invasion – Mediazona

By AFP

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Authorities in Russia have launched more than 10,000 cases against people accused of "discrediting" the army since the full-scale invasion of Ukraine, the independent news outlet Mediazona reported Thursday.

Legislation passed soon after Russia's February 2022 invasion punishes public acts or statements seen as critical of the Russian armed forces. Thousands of people have been detained as a result.

"The 10,000th case was submitted to a court in the first week of August," Mediazona said.

Most cases came in the first months of the war, with the total number of charges reaching 5,614 by the end of 2022, Mediazona wrote. This year so far there have been at least 1,410

cases.

Individuals found guilty of an initial offense face a fine of up to 50,000 rubles ($566).

But those who face a repeat offense within a year are at risk of criminal charges and a prison sentence of up to five years — or seven years if their actions led to injuries, death or mass public order offenses.

According to the civil rights watchdog OVD-Info, 200 people have been indicted for a repeat offense, although some of these people have left the country.

In February, Memorial rights activist Oleg Orlov was found guilty of discrediting the army as a repeat offense and sentenced to two and half years in prison. Last month, the 71-year-old was freed in an international prisoner exchange and flew to Germany.

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