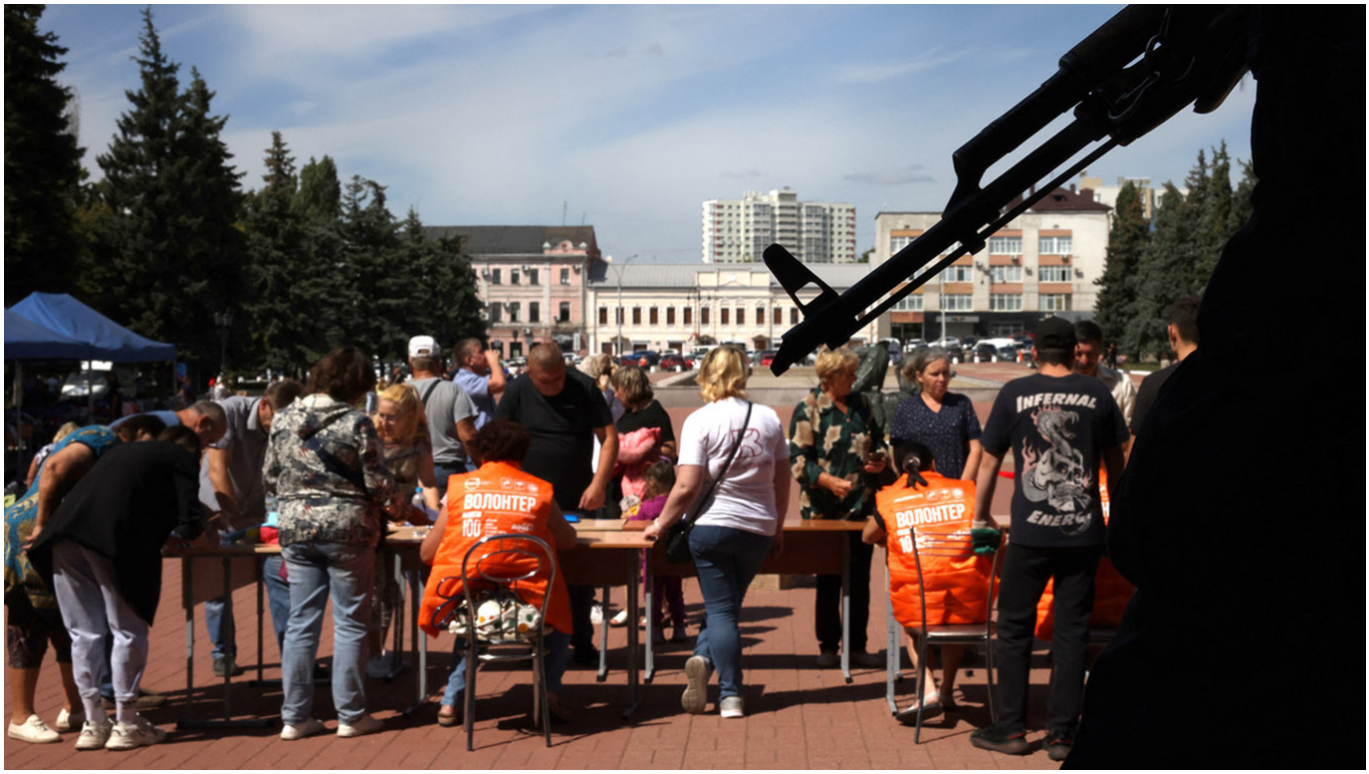
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Russia Charges Australian, Romanian Journalists Over Reporting From Kursk

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Tatyana Makeyeva / AFP

Russia's Federal Security Service (FSB) pressed criminal charges against two Australian journalists and one Romanian journalist for illegally crossing the border into the southwestern Kursk region while on reporting assignments, state media reported Friday.

Authorities in Russia have so far charged 12 foreign journalists over their work in the Kursk region following a surprise incursion by Ukrainian forces on Aug. 6. The journalists and their employers insist that their activities did not violate international law.

The latest charges are aimed at Australian Broadcasting Corporation correspondents Kathryn Diss and Fletcher Yeung, who reported earlier this month from Sudzha, a Ukrainian-held town in the Kursk region. Despite being identified as U.S. citizens by the FSB, both Diss and Yeung are Australian nationals, according to the state-run TASS news agency.

Romanian journalist Mircea Barba, a special correspondent for the website HotNews, was also charged after being criticized by pro-war Russian military bloggers for reporting from the

Kursk region in late August.

The journalists face charges of “illegally crossing the state border of Russia,” which could result in up to five years in prison if convicted.

Kyiv claims it has captured dozens of towns and villages in the Kursk region, including Sudzha, while Moscow asserts its forces have gradually regained control of the territory during counteroffensive operations.

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