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Moscow Police Arrest 3 Journalists Outside Annexation Celebration on Red Square

By AFP

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A concert event commemorating Russia's claimed annexation of Ukrainian regions. **Sergei Karpukhin / TASS**

Three journalists working for independent Russian media outlets were arrested in Moscow late Monday outside a concert celebrating the Kremlin's claimed annexation of Ukrainian regions, the human rights watchdog OVD-Info said.

The concert marked two years since President Vladimir Putin signed decrees annexing the eastern Ukrainian regions of Donetsk and Luhansk, along with the southern Zaporizhzhia and Kherson regions on Sept. 30, 2022.

Citing the detainees' relatives, OVD-Info said one of the journalists worked at the news website Republic and the other two for SOTAvision.

The journalists were taken to a police station and two of them were charged with "hooliganism," the watchdog said, adding that their mobile phones had been confiscated.

SOTAvision said its reporters — who were denied access to the celebration on Red Square — had been arrested while interviewing spectators leaving the concert.

Since the launch of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, the Kremlin has ramped up pressure on both foreign and independent media outlets in the country.

Both Republic and SOTAvision are designated as "foreign agents" by the authorities, a label used to stifle dissent.

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