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Russia Presses Criminal Charges Against YouTuber Varlamov for Breaking 'Foreign Agents' Law

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Ilya Varlamov. **Sergei Kiselev / Moskva News Agency**

Russian law enforcement authorities announced charges Monday against exiled YouTuber Ilya Varlamov for violating the country's "foreign agent" laws.

Varlamov, a popular travel blogger with over 5 million YouTube subscribers, has been a vocal critic of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. In 2023, Russia's Justice Ministry added him to its list of "foreign agents," a designation that requires individuals to submit financial reports and include a lengthy disclaimer on all published content.

Moscow courts have fined Varlamov twice this year for violating "foreign agent" laws, which prompted law enforcement to press criminal charges against him.

"Varlamov continued to distribute public messages and materials on social media without indicating they were created or distributed by a foreign agent," the Moscow Prosecutor

General's Office said in a statement.

The 40-year-old Varlamov faces up to two years in prison if convicted.

Varlamov, who resides outside Russia, has vowed to continue posting online without the mandatory "foreign agent" label.

"I consider the law on foreign agents unconstitutional. Its only purpose is political repression and censorship," he wrote on Telegram.

Earlier this year, the YouTuber was also charged with "discrediting" the Russian armed forces.

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