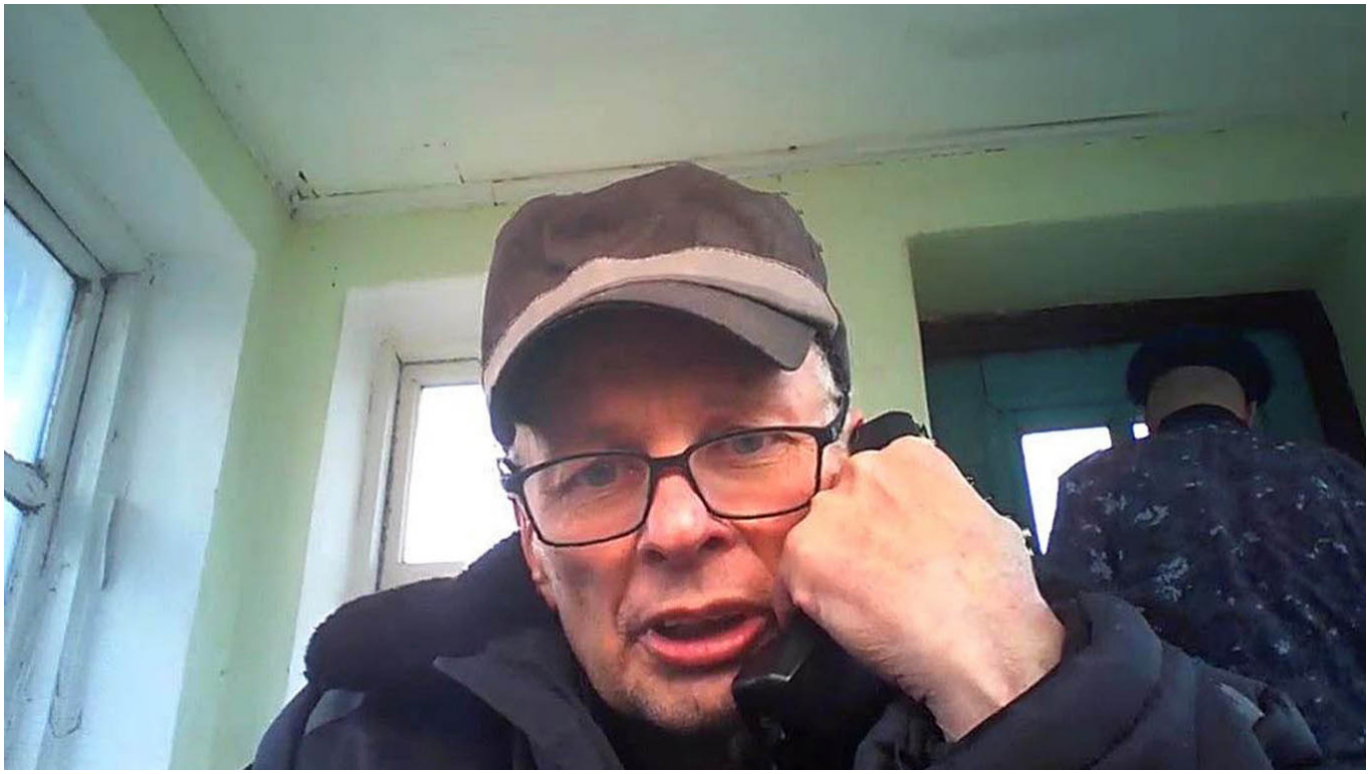
The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Hollywood Stars Back Jailed Russian Activist on Hunger Strike

October 17, 2025



Mikhail Kriger. **Social media**

Actors Martin and Janet Sheen, John Cusack and Slovenian philosopher Slavoj Žižek have signed an open letter urging Russian prison officials to end the solitary confinement of jailed activist Mikhail Kriger, who has been on a dry hunger strike for more than a week.

They join Garbage frontwoman Shirley Manson, who earlier this week called on the local prison chief to end Kriger's isolation.

Kriger, 65, first launched a hunger strike in late September. He started a dry hunger strike — meaning abstention from both food and water — last Friday after a planned visit with his daughter was canceled.

Kriger has accused prison authorities of deliberately trying to isolate him to prevent contact with other inmates.

The latest signatories of the letter to the head of Correctional Colony No. 5 in Russia's Oryol

region claimed Kriger's condition "has now become critical," according to the letter published by the exiled news website Mediazona.

"[Kriger's] speech has slowed, his gaze is unfocused and he is extremely weak. Dry hunger strikes cause organ failure and quickly lead to shock and death," the Sheens, Cusack and Žižek wrote.

Related article: Jailed Russian Opposition Activist Mikhail Kriger Declares Hunger Strike

Kriger was in 2023 sentenced to seven years in prison for "justifying terrorism" and "inciting hatred" over anti-Kremlin social media posts. The activist said during trial that he was being persecuted for his anti-war views and open pro-Ukrainian position.

The Nobel Peace Prize-winning human rights group Memorial designated Kriger a political prisoner.

The anti-Kremlin activist group Pussy Riot raised alarm over Kriger's hunger strike earlier this week, calling on followers to write letters to him and the prison administration.

It was not immediately clear whether authorities in the Oryol region prison colony intended to respond to the international appeals.

It was also not clear when Kriger was expected to be moved out of solitary confinement and whether his medical condition was being properly monitored.

Kriger's support group said the activist was taken to a regional hospital on Wednesday for tests, the results of which have not been shared.

Kriger's lawyer said he was "cheerful, wrote poems and even offered to hop on one leg to show his strength," the support group said in an update Thursday.

"Forced feeding will only begin if he loses consciousness or doctors deem his condition critical," Kriger's support group wrote on Telegram.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2025/10/17/hollywood-stars-back-jailed-russian-activist-on-hunger-strike-a90849