

Founder of Pro-Kremlin News Outlet Readovka Arrested on Fraud Charges, Sources Say

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Alexei Kostylev. **Artyom Geodakyan / TASS**

Russian police have arrested Alexei Kostylev, the founder and former editor-in-chief of the pro-Kremlin news outlet Readovka, on charges of fraud, RBC [reported](#) on Friday, citing anonymous law enforcement sources.

Kostylev was arrested on Wednesday, the sources said, and investigators are requesting that a judge order him to be placed in pre-trial detention for two months.

According to the Telegram channel Russian Life, where Kostylev currently serves as editor-in-chief, a court hearing is [expected](#) to take place on Friday.

Neither RBC nor Russian Life provided details on the fraud charges against the journalist.

Anonymous police sources [told](#) the state-run news agency TASS that Kostylev is suspected of engaging in fraudulent activities involving at least 1 million rubles (\$13,000).

Related article: [Irkutsk Police Arrest Mayor of Town Where Residents Have Gone Weeks Without Heating and Water](#)

In 2011, Kostylev launched Readovka as a news channel on the Russian social media website VKontakte. The outlet later expanded to become a stand-alone network of reporters covering regional news stories across the country.

Readovka [underwent](#) a dramatic shift in editorial policy around the time of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, becoming more ostensibly pro-government in its coverage.

The outlet has more than 2 million subscribers on its Telegram channel.

Readovka [said](#) last year that it had undergone a change of ownership. Investigative media [identified](#) its new owner as Andrei Tkachenko, a senior figure in the Kremlin-linked nonprofit Dialog.

Readovka [said](#) Friday it was cooperating with law enforcement authorities in the criminal case against Kostylev, which it said was not related to its activities.

Meduza [reported](#) in 2023 that Kostylev had tried to supply the Russian military with khaki-colored winter coats from China, but authorities in Beijing blocked the shipment to avoid violating Western sanctions.

On Friday, Russian Life stressed that placing Kostylev in pre-trial detention could negatively impact his recovery from injuries he sustained in a motorcycle accident in October 2024.

“Kostylev is disabled... We make an earnest request to choose a lenient measure for Alexei Kostylev that would allow him to receive the necessary medical care,” Russian Life wrote.

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