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Russia Files Media Cases Against Kommersant, SIM Media Holding and Several Editors

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Ruwiki

Russian authorities have filed administrative cases against several media outlets and editors under laws regulating mass media content, according to court records reviewed by exiled news outlet Mediazona.

The cases were submitted to Moscow's Judicial District No. 374 in the Tagansky district and involve alleged violations of Article 13.15 of Russia's administrative code, which covers abuses of media freedom.

Among the organizations facing charges are the legal entity of newspaper Kommersant, which was accused of disseminating what authorities describe as "false socially significant information," and media holding SIM, the former Rambler Group, which owns sports website Championat and culture publication Afisha Daily.

SIM was accused of distributing information about an organization designated as "extremist" by Russian authorities.

The cases come as Russia continues to tighten restrictions on independent journalism and media coverage more than four years after launching its full-scale invasion of Ukraine, a campaign that has been accompanied by sweeping censorship laws, criminal prosecutions and the closure or exile of many independent news organizations.

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Court records also list several journalists and editors as defendants, including RusNews editor-in-chief Sergei Ainbinder, former Vedomosti journalist Yelizaveta Sergina, who has been linked by Russian media to the Telegram channel "Merciless PR Specialist," Atomnaya Energiya 2.0 editor-in-chief Pavel Yakovlev, Moskovskiye Novosti editor-in-chief Alexander Berezkin and Arsenal Otechestva military magazine editor-in-chief Dmitry Drozdenko.

The specific allegations against the individuals were not disclosed in the court database.

The first hearings are scheduled for June 29 and July 1.

The new cases come as Russia ranks near the bottom of global press freedom assessments.

In its 2026 World Press Freedom Index, media watchdog Reporters Without Borders ranked Russia 172nd out of 180 countries and territories, its lowest-ever position in the survey. Only Turkmenistan, Vietnam, Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia, Iran, China, North Korea and Eritrea ranked lower.

Russia's standing in the index has fallen sharply since the invasion of Ukraine in 2022, following the introduction of wartime censorship laws, including legislation criminalizing the spread of information deemed false by authorities about the Russian military.

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