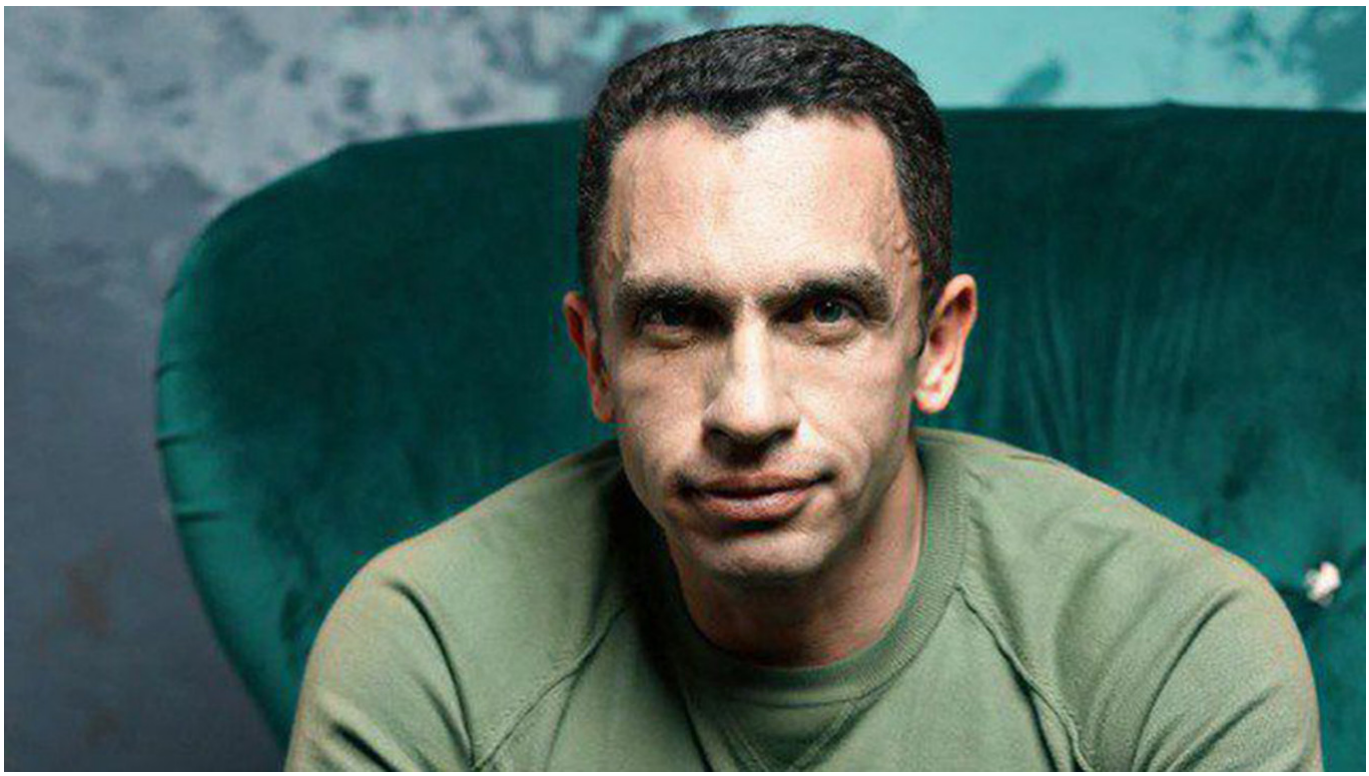
The Moscow Times
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Moscow Police Arrest Political Expert Alexander Kynev on Drug Charges

September 25, 2026



Alexander Kynev. **@alexander_kynev / Telegram**

Political consultant and elections expert Alexander Kynev has been arrested in Moscow on drug charges, the exiled news outlet Mediazona reported Friday.

Kynev, a former political science professor at Moscow's Higher School of Economics, was charged with "large-scale illegal drug production, sale and trafficking," his lawyer told Mediazona. The charge carries a maximum sentence of 20 years in prison.

His lawyer later told the exiled news outlet Meduza that he pleaded not guilty to the drug charge.

The circumstances surrounding Kynev's arrest were not immediately known. The last post on his Telegram channel, where he writes commentary on Russian and world politics, was made on Wednesday morning.

Law enforcement officials have not commented on the arrest.

Russia's Justice Ministry designated Kynev a "foreign agent" in February. Despite his public criticism of the government and the invasion of Ukraine, he chose to remain in Moscow amid growing political repression.

Kynev, who wrote regular opinion columns for The Moscow Times before it was designated an "undesirable" organization in 2024, has worked as a political consultant since the 1990s, when he was first involved with the campaigns of the liberal Yabloko party.

Over the years, he has worked for a number of independent political organizations, including the now-disbanded election observer Golos.

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