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Father and Daughter Who Fled Russia Win Magnitsky Human Rights Award

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Alexei Moskalyov and his daughter Maria. **@Govorit_NeMoskva / Telegram**

Alexei Moskalyov and his daughter, Maria, who fled Russia after facing political persecution for an anti-war drawing, have been awarded the 2026 Magnitsky Human Rights Award.

The organization behind the annual honor announced Thursday that the Moskalyovs received the "Courage Under Fire" award for their refusal to remain silent in the face of state prosecution.

"Throughout everything we have endured, Masha has remained true to the values I tried to teach her from childhood: honesty, compassion, courage and the determination to speak the truth, even when doing so comes at a terrible personal cost," Moskalyov said in a statement.

In 2023, a Russian court sentenced Moskalyov to two years in prison on charges of "discrediting" the Russian military. The case began a year earlier, after Maria, then 12, drew a picture at school depicting Ukrainian mothers protecting their children from Russian missiles.

Maria was initially placed in a state orphanage before being sent to live with her estranged mother.

Following his release in October 2024, Moskalyov reunited with his daughter. Faced with ongoing harassment by law enforcement, including repeated police searches at their home, the pair fled Russia for France, where they were granted political asylum.

The Magnitsky Human Rights Awards were created in memory of Sergei Magnitsky, a lawyer who died in a Moscow prison in 2009 after uncovering a major state tax fraud scheme. The annual awards honor journalists, activists and public figures who risk their lives to confront authoritarian regimes.

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