

Network of Concerned Historians				NCH
Campaigns				
Year original	Year follow-up	Circular	Country	Name
2023		106	Russia	Oleg Orlov

Announcement

Dear Colleagues,

Currently, Russian historian and co-chair of Memorial **Oleg Orlov** is charged with “repeated discrediting of the Russian army” for his protest against the Russian invasion of Ukraine. He faces up to three years in prison.

Please sign Memorial’s petition on his behalf by sending your details (full name; title; institution) to press@memohrc.org.

For the petition in English, please see below.

For previous reports about Oleg Orlov, see NCH *Annual Reports* of [2010](#), [2012](#), [2022](#) and [2023](#).

With best wishes,

Antoon De Baets and Ruben Zeeman
Network of Concerned Historians (NCH)

[13 September 2023]

PERSECUTION OF OLEG ORLOV FOR HIS ANTI-WAR STANCE

[English translation; original source: <https://memorialcenter.org/stories/delo-orlova>]

Oleg Petrovich Orlov is a well-known Russian human rights activist and co-chairman of the board of the Memorial Human Rights Defense Center. He is accused of “repeatedly discrediting the Russian

armed forces” for condemning the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The human rights activist faces up to three years in prison.

On 21 March 2023, at about 7 a.m., law enforcement officials searched the apartment of Oleg Orlov and eight other members of Memorial. This happened as part of a criminal case regarding the “rehabilitation of Nazism” (Art. 354.1 Criminal Code). After interrogations, all were released pending further investigation.

However, on the same day the Investigative Committee opened a criminal case against Oleg Orlov for “repeated discrediting” of the Russian army (Art. 280.3 Criminal Code). The maximum punishment is three years in prison. He has been forbidden to leave the country for an unspecified period of time.

A case of “repeated defamation” can be initiated if a person already has at least one effective court decision on a similar charge (Art. 20.3.3 Code of Administrative Offenses) in force for a year.

In 2022, the court found Oleg Orlov guilty of organizing and participating in anti-war pickets five times. He was charged twice with “discrediting the armed forces” (Art. 20.3.3 Code of Administrative Offenses). In one case Orlov picketed in the center of Moscow with a poster “Crazy Putin is pushing the world towards nuclear war.” In the second case, he was detained on Red Square with a poster “USSR 1945 – a country that fought fascism. Russia 2022 – a country where fascism is defeated.”

According to law enforcement agencies, Orlov “discredited” the armed forces for the third time in a year when he posted a Russian translation of his article written for the French publication Mediapart on Facebook on 14 November 2022. The text is titled “They wanted fascism, they got it” and refers to Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

Orlov’s case is being considered by the Golovinsky District Court of Moscow.

It is largely based on the conclusion of a linguistic examination prepared by math teacher Natalia Kryukova and translator Alexander Tarasov from the state-affiliated Center for Socio-cultural Expertise. This center is known for its involvement in political persecution. In 2021 the same experts found that the Memorial Human Rights Center “justifies extremism and terrorism.” The Prosecutor General’s Office attached their report to the lawsuit regarding the liquidation of the center.

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We call to express solidarity with the human rights defender and distribute the information about his persecution.

Sign the letter in support of Orlov!

If you would like to join the signatories, please send your details (full name; title; institution) to press@memohrc.org.

Note: Please see also the open letter of historians and slavists in defense of Oleg Orlov [in Russian] at: <https://memorialcenter.org/news/otkrytoe-pismo-istorikov-i-slavistov-v-zashhitu-olega-orlova>