

30 April 2021

Russia: Judicial harassment of human rights lawyer Ivan Pavlov

On 30 April 2021, the human rights lawyer **Ivan Pavlov**'s hotel room in Moscow was searched by Federal Security Service (FSB) officers, he was detained by the officers and interrogated by the Investigative Committee. His flat, summer house, the office of his organisation Team 29 and one of the organization's staff members were also searched. Later on the same day, the Basmanny District Court issued restriction measures against Ivan Pavlov, forbidding him to use any form of communication, including the internet, for any purpose, except for calling the emergency services or contacting the investigator for the case, or his relatives. The human rights lawyer has been charged with "disclosure of the data of a preliminary investigation" in relation to his legal representation of former journalist Ivan Safronov who is accused of high treason.

[Ivan Pavlov](#) is a prominent human rights lawyer and director of Team 29, an association of lawyers and journalists. His legal work focuses on defending those wrongly accused by the security services of disclosing state secrets, high treason, or espionage. He has also been working to ensure public access to government information, and with this aim founded the Institute for the Development of Freedom of Information which was designated as a "foreign agent" by the Russian authorities in 2014. In 2015, Team 29 was established to provide consultation and legal aid to individuals asserting their right to receive and distribute information, defend victims abused by law enforcement and security agencies, provide recommendations on how to respond to searches, interrogations, arrests, etc. Ivan Pavlov has also contributed to the development of Russian legislation on the right to freedom of information. He received the Moscow Helsinki Group Award for defending human rights in court in 2015 and the Alison Des Forges Award for Extraordinary Activism in 2018, awarded by Human Rights Watch to activists who put themselves at great risk to protect the dignity and rights of others.

On 30 April 2021, Federal Security Service (FSB) officers searched the hotel room of Ivan Pavlov in Moscow. Following this, the human rights lawyer was then detained by the officers and interrogated by the Investigative Committee. On the same day, law enforcement officials searched the office of the organisation Team 29, the home of the organisation's IT specialist Igor Dorfman, which lasted 10 hours, and the home of Ivan Pavlov's wife Ekaterina Pavlova, as well as Ivan Pavlov's summer house in the Vyborg district of the Leningrad region. The lawyer who was present at the search of the Team 29 office signed a non-disclosure agreement, stating he would not discuss details of the search.

Following the interrogation by the Investigative Committee, Ivan Pavlov was indicted for "disclosure of the data of a preliminary investigation" in the case of Ivan Safronov under Article 310 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation. The criminal case was opened against the human rights lawyer based on a report signed by the head of the FSB, Alexander Bortnikov. According to the investigation, Ivan Pavlov shared a copy of the indictment against Ivan Safronov with the newspaper Vedomosti, and that he told reporters in front of the Lefortovo court that an anonymous witness appeared in the case against Ivan Safronov.

Later the same day, 30 April 2021, the Basmanny District Court of Moscow issued restriction measures against Ivan Pavlov. According to the measures, Ivan Pavlov is forbidden to use any form of communication, including the internet, for any purpose, except for calling the emergency

services or contacting the investigator for the case, or his relatives. These restrictions will remain in place until the court orders they are revoked or the conditions changed.

Ivan Pavlov had traveled to Moscow to attend the court hearing of his client, Ivan Safronov, a former journalist at the Kommersant and Vedomosti newspapers, who was arrested on allegations of high treason. Investigators believe Ivan Safronov disclosed secret information to a Czech intelligence agent working undercover in Moscow as a newspaper reporter, however Ivan Safronov and his supporters have rejected the allegation, saying it is politically motivated. Ivan Pavlov and his colleagues from Team 29 are also representing opposition politician Alexei Navalny's Anti-Corruption Foundation (FBK) and his Citizens' Rights Defense Foundation (FZPG) in a case filed by a prosecutor in Moscow requesting the group be labelled as an "extremist" organisation. On 27 April 2021, the Moscow City Court approved a motion by prosecutors to suspend some of the activities of FBK and FZPG.

Ivan Pavlov previously represented a physicist Viktor Kudryavtsev, also charged with high treason. Viktor Kudryavtsev died of cancer on 29 April 2021, whilst his trial was pending. A day before he was detained, on 29 April 2021, Ivan Pavlov accused the FSB of causing Viktor Kudryavtsev's death, calling it "an example of how the secret services are literally killing Russian science in general".

Ivan Pavlov has previously been subjected to harassment from the authorities in relation to his human rights work. In August 2020, in response to a complaint made by the FSB against Ivan Pavlov, the Ministry of Justice requested the St. Petersburg Bar Association to initiate disciplinary proceedings against the human rights lawyer in relation to his refusal to sign a non-disclosure statement in Ivan Safronov's case. According to the human rights lawyer, the reason was that he did not agree to sign a non-disclosure agreement about the preliminary investigation on the case. However, the St. Petersburg Bar Association did not take action to disbar the human rights lawyer in response to the complaint.

Front Line Defenders is seriously concerned by the judicial prosecution of human rights lawyer Ivan Pavlov, the searches of his hotel room and his properties, the home of his colleague and the office of Team 29. The organisation believes these actions will have a chilling effect on the work of lawyers and human rights defenders in Russia as they undermine access to effective and independent legal assistance to protect human rights. Front Line Defenders condemns the judicial prosecution and continued harassment of Ivan Pavlov in reprisal for his legitimate human rights work and practicing his profession.

Front Line Defenders calls on the authorities in Russia to:

1. Immediately and unconditionally cease the judicial prosecution of and harassment against Ivan Pavlov and other members of Team 29, as it is believed that they are solely motivated by their legitimate and peaceful human rights work;
2. Take all necessary measures to guarantee the physical and psychological integrity and security of Ivan Pavlov;
3. Guarantee in all circumstances that all human rights defenders in Russia are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions including judicial harassment.