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## **Russia: Woman human rights defender and journalist Isabella Evloeva's parents' apartment raided**

On 7 June 2022, in Sunzha, Ingushetia, representatives of the Investigative Committee of the Russian Federation raided the apartment where woman human rights defender and journalist, **Isabella Evloeva**, is officially registered. The apartment belongs to her elderly parents. This raid is part of a continued state-sponsored criminal persecution against Isabella Evloeva, who is now being charged with two counts of "public circulation of fake information on the deployment of the Russian army and the state bodies' execution of its powers." Article 207.3 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation suggests that, if charged, a woman human rights defender may face up to 15 years in prison.

Isabella Evloeva is a woman human rights defender and journalist. She is the Editor-in-Chief of Fortanga.org, a regional independent media outlet that covers human rights violations in the Republic of Ingushetia, including the border conflict between the Chechen Republic and the Republic of Ingushetia, and covers persecution of the human rights defenders and activists in Ingushetia. The woman human rights defender also writes for her telegram-based blog "Not a Woman, but a Journalist" and she uses this platform to write about mass human rights violations committed by the Russian military in Ukraine. Isabella Evloeva collaborated with other media outlets covering Russia's North Caucasus, including Caucasian Knot, Kavkaz.Realii., and Current Time.

On 7 June 2022, in Sunzha, Ingushetia, representatives of the Investigative Committee of the Russian Federation raided the apartment where woman human rights defender and journalist Isabella Evloeva is officially registered. The apartment belongs to her elderly parents; the woman human rights defender does not reside there. On 6 June 2022, Isabella Evloeva's parents received a letter stating that on 10 May 2022, the Investigative Committee of The Russian Federation in the Republic of Ingushetia launched a criminal case against her for "public circulation of fake information on the deployment of the Russian's army and the state bodies' execution of its powers" as envisioned by the Part 1, Article 207.3 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation. A woman human rights defender may face up to 15 years in prison if charged. After the raid, Isabella Evloeva reported on her social media that she can't get in touch with her parents, saying that the law enforcement officers might have brought them in for questioning. She regained contact with them by the end of 7 June 2022.

Since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, the Investigative Committee launched two criminal cases against Isabella Evloeva. In both cases, the authorities claim that the woman human rights defender violated the so-called law on "circulating fake information about the activities of Russian military in Ukraine." Isabella Evloeva first faced the charges on 25 March 2022, for her blog post, where she criticised the use of minors in military propaganda and the fact that local authorities in

the city of Magas places the letter 'Z', that has become the symbol of the Russia's war in Ukraine, on the Tower of Concord. Woman human rights defender wrote that the letter 'Z' is a "new-age svastika in Russia- a synonym of the aggression, death, pain, and shameless manipulation." The second count of "fake information" charges emerged on 28 April 2022. The Investigative Committee charged Isabella Evloeva for her blog post on horrendous crimes committed by the Russian military in the Ukrainian city of Bucha.

Relatives of the woman human rights defender also faced pressure when the Investigative Committee launched the first criminal case against her for "spreading fake information about the Russian military". On 27 April 2022, law enforcement officers brought Isabella Evloeva's father and daughter in for questioning

Front Line Defenders condemns the continued persecution of woman human rights defender and journalist, Isabella Evloeva, for her peaceful and legitimate human rights work and express grave concerns about the State's pressure on her close family members. Front Line Defenders urges that the expansion of the Russian Federation's Criminal Code with the Article 207.3 on "fake information against the activities of Russian military" contributes to the rapidly growing censorship in the country, has a chilling effect on civic liberties and is disproportionately used to target human rights defenders and journalists. Front Line Defenders call upon the Russian Authorities to:

**Front Line Defenders urges the Russian authorities to:**

1. cease all persecution against woman human rights defender Isabella Evloeva and her family members;
2. repeal the Article 207.3 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation on "public circulation of fake information on the deployment of the Russian's army and the state bodies' execution of its powers" as it limits freedom of speech and disproportionately targets human rights defenders and journalists;
3. cease targeting all human rights defenders in Russia and guarantee in all circumstances that they can carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals.