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4 July 2022

Russia: Human rights defender and lawyer Dmitry Talantov detained and faces “spreading false information” charges

On 29 June 2022, the Cheryomushki District Court of Moscow sentenced human rights defender and lawyer, **Dmitry Talantov**, to pre-trial detention as a restrictive measure until 23 August 2022. The human rights defender is facing charges for the alleged public dissemination of "deliberately false information" about the actions of the Russian Armed Forces stipulated by part 2 of Article 207.3 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation. Officially, Dmitry Talantov is being prosecuted for voicing his anti-war sentiments on Facebook. However, his colleagues state that Russian Federal Security Services might be targeting the human rights lawyer for acting as a defence attorney of former journalist and advisor to the Head of RosCosmos, Ivan Safronov. If charged, Dmitry Talantov can face up to 10 years of imprisonment under these charges.

[Dmitry Talantov](#) is a human rights lawyer and president of the Bar Association of the Udmurtia region. Dmitry Talantov is the acting lawyer for Ivan Safronov, a journalist and RosCosmos official, on trial for a politically motivated high-treason charge. Dmitry Talantov started acting as Ivan Safronov's attorney in August 2021, after Safronov's previous attorney, human rights defender and lawyer, Ivan Pavlov, faced persecution and threats of disbarment because of his legal work on the case.

On 28 June 2022, in Izhevsk, around 10.00 am, human rights lawyer Dmitry Talantov was [detained, handcuffed, and taken](#) to the Investigative Committee for questioning. The human rights defender did not have access to any legal assistance at the time of his arrest. The law enforcement also seized Dmitry Talantov's documents, that constitute attorney-client privilege. The police raided Dmitry Talantov's apartment, his country-house, and his office in the Bar Association of the Udmurtia region. In the evening of 28 June 2022, the human rights lawyer was transported to Moscow. The next day, on 29 June 2022, the Cheryomushki District Court sentenced Dmitry Talantov to pre-trial detention until 23 August 2022. The human rights lawyer has been charged with public dissemination of "deliberately false information" about the actions of the Russian Armed Forces as per part 2 of Article 207.3 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation. The charge is related to Dmitry Talantov's Facebook posts from April 2022, which conveyed his strong anti-war sentiments.

The Prosecutor asked the Judge to hold the trial behind closed doors, arguing that the case contains an investigative search report by police, an expert examination that contains “other state secret information, protected by the law,” and a response from the General Staff of the Ministry of Defence, that also contains such state secret information. The motion was granted despite Dmitry Talantov's statement that no documentation could qualify as a state secret. The Court also refused to provide Dmitry Talantov any medical assistance, including refusal to call an ambulance to the Court, when the human rights defender reported chest pain and an increase in his blood pressure.

Judicial harassment against Dmitry Talantov constitutes part of a continued attack against human rights lawyers, who act as defence attorneys for journalist and RosCosmos advisor Ivan Safronov. On 30 April 2021, the Federal Security Service arrested human rights defender and attorney **Ivan Pavlov** in Moscow and indicted him 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, and prohibiting him from engaging in any communication, except in-person meetings. Since then, in November 2021, the Russian Ministry of Justice listed Ivan Pavlov as a foreign agent. In March 2022, the St. Petersburg Bar Association barred Ivan Pavlov from providing any type of legal assistance, stating that if he continued to do so, he would face disbarment. Dmitry Talantov's colleagues state that persecution for anti-war sentiments can be a method of preventing human rights lawyers from working on Ivan Safronov's high-treason case. They have launched a [petition](#), calling for the release of the human rights lawyer.

Front Line Defenders is deeply concerned by the detention of human rights lawyer Dmitry Talantov as it believes he has been targeted due to his legitimate work as a human rights defender and lawyer. Front Line Defenders reiterates its concern regarding the laws on "fakes" and "disinformation" currently in the Russian legal framework, as it is being used to disproportionately target human rights defenders and lawyers. The targeting and systemic persecution of human rights lawyers by the agents of the Russian state forms part of a worrying trend that includes judicial harassment, office raids, disciplinary penalties, and disbarment threats and contributed to the rapid shrinking of the civil society space.

Front Line Defenders urges the Russian authorities to:

1. Immediately release human rights defender and lawyer Dmitry Talantov and drop all charges against him as it is believed that they are solely motivated by his legitimate and peaceful work in defence of human rights;
2. Ensure that all necessary measures are taken to guarantee the physical and psychological integrity and security of Dmitry Talantov;
3. Repeal 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;
4. Guarantee in all circumstances that human rights defenders can carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions, including judicial harassment.