

Putin Signs Law Introducing Jail Terms for 'Fake News' on Army

By [AFP](#)

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Russian President Vladimir Putin on Friday signed into law a bill introducing jail terms of up to 15 years for fake news about the Russian army, as Moscow pushes forward with its invasion of Ukraine.

The bill, adopted by lawmakers earlier on Friday, sets out jail terms of varying lengths and fines against people who publish "knowingly false information" about the military, with harsher penalties to hit when dissemination is deemed to have serious consequences.

Putin also signed a bill that would allow fines or jail terms of up to three years for calling for sanctions against Russia with Moscow facing harsh economic penalties from Western capitals over the invasion.

The past year has seen an unprecedented crackdown on independent and critical voices in Russia that only intensified after the start of the invasion.

Russia's media watchdog said Friday it had restricted access to the BBC and other independent media websites and blocked social media giant Facebook.

Two news outlets said they will stop reporting on Ukraine to protect their journalists, while the BBC announced a halt of its operations in Russia.

Russian media have been instructed to only publish information provided by official sources, which describe the invasion as a military operation.

State-controlled broadcasters have meanwhile reinforced government narratives about nationalism in Ukraine and Moscow's claim that Ukrainian soldiers are using civilians as human shields.

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