

Russian Politicians, Journalists Targeted in Police Raids Linked to Ex-Lawmaker Ponomaryov

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Ilya Ponomaryov at a 2013 opposition rally in Moscow, 2013. [putnik \(CC BY 3.0\)](#)

Russian police raided the homes of politicians and journalists in seven regions over ties to a pro-Ukraine former lawmaker accused of spreading “fake news” about Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, media [reported](#) Thursday.

This is at least the third [wave of mass searches](#) linked to Ponomaryov since the vocal Ukraine war critic was arrested in absentia in late August on charges of spreading “false information” about the Russian army.

Ponomaryov, who has been living in exile in Kyiv since 2016, [denied](#) any links to many of the targets of Thursday’s searches.

“I’ve heard something about the people who were visited today, but nothing about most of the others,” he told independent media outlet Sota.

In Moscow, police raided the homes of two former city legislative assembly members and a Moscow State University (MSU) professor who stood as a candidate for the Communist Party in the 2021 parliamentary elections.

Footage that emerged on messaging app Telegram showed Lobanov lying prone on the floor of his apartment with a torn t-shirt.

Embed:

A post on Lobanov's channel on Telegram [said](#) later in the day that he was charged with disobeying police orders and sentenced to 15 days in jail.

Police also searched the apartments of journalists from two local news websites in the Siberian city of Tyumen, according to the independent outlet Mediazona.

State news agencies TASS and RIA Novosti reported that the raids targeted those who allegedly attended a meeting of Russian opposition members organized by Ponomaryov, as well as those linked to his social media pages.

Ponomaryov, 47, faces up to 10 years in prison if found guilty of spreading “fake news” about the Russian army — one of a package of wartime censorship laws passed after the Kremlin sent troops into Ukraine.

The exiled former lawmaker — a bitter critic of President Vladimir Putin and a supporter of Kyiv — was the only member of the Russian parliament to vote against the annexation of Crimea from Ukraine in 2014.

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