

Reporters Detained at Moscow Protest by Soldiers' Wives – AFP

By [AFP](#)

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Russian police on Saturday detained a group of around 20 journalists, including an AFP reporter, covering a central Moscow protest by the wives of men mobilized to fight in Ukraine.

A detained AFP video journalist said the Russian and foreign reporters were being transported in a van to a police station.

The group of all male reporters were detained as they covered and filmed the women walking up to Red Square.

Video footage showed police bringing reporters wearing yellow press vests to police vans.

For several weeks, the wives of mobilized men have been staging protests outside the Kremlin walls, demanding the men be brought home.

The movement has grown out of the anger of relatives of reservists sent to Ukraine under President Vladimir Putin's September 2022 mobilization decree.

The movement — extremely sensitive for authorities — has so far gone unpunished.

It has been ignored by state media, with Russia having strict censorship laws.

The topic is especially uncomfortable for the Kremlin ahead of the March presidential election, in which Putin is running for a fifth Kremlin term.

Russian police on Saturday detained a group of around 20 journalists, including an AFP reporter, covering a protest in Moscow by the wives of men mobilized to fight in Ukraine.

The women have staged rare protests outside the Kremlin walls for weeks, in an uncomfortable movement for the authorities that has so far not been put down.

A detained AFP video journalist said Russian and foreign reporters — all men — were detained and transported in a van to a police station.

The group of journalists was arrested as they covered and filmed the women — who are demanding their partners be brought home from Ukraine — outside Red Square.

Video footage showed police bringing reporters wearing yellow press vests to police vans.

The wives of mobilized men have been staging protests outside the Kremlin walls every weekend for weeks, symbolically bringing red flowers to a tomb of an unknown soldier.

While Moscow has orchestrated a huge crackdown on dissent at home, the women's movement has so far gone unpunished.

The detained AFP journalist said around 40 people took part in the protest.

An online live stream posted by the women's group showed participants walking together through central Moscow.

"We are here as the women who need their husbands," said one of the women in the live stream.

She said they will "get creative" should authorities try to put down their protest.

The movement is extremely sensitive for authorities, who appear unwilling to spread more anger by arresting women.

It has grown out of the anger of relatives of reservists sent to Ukraine under President Vladimir Putin's September 2022 mobilization decree.

It has also been ignored by state media.

The topic is especially uncomfortable for the Kremlin ahead of the March presidential election, in which Putin is running for a fifth Kremlin term, more than two years after

launching the Ukraine offensive.

According to independent media, there were also several arrests of protest participants outside the headquarters for Putin's candidacy in the election.

Participants noted that police only arrested men.

Another woman in the video live stream said the protest was aimed at showing Russians living as normal during the Ukraine conflict "that there is another part of society that suffers all the time."

According to Putin, 244,000 out of 617,000 of Moscow's forces in Ukraine are mobilized men.

The Kremlin's mobilization drive in 2022 led to an exodus of men abroad.

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