

NEWS

## U.S.-Russian Citizen Arrested For Social-Media Posts

By RFE/RL

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Russia has arrested a dual U.S.-Russian citizen on charges of "rehabilitating Nazism" for two critical posts he made on social media.

Yury Malyev was arrested on December 8 in St. Petersburg and ordered to pretrial detention for two months, the Smolnensky district court said in a post on its [Telegram](#) channel.

Malyev last year posted on his Odnoklassniki page an image of the St. George ribbon, which represents Russia's victory over Nazi Germany, along with a caption that included the face of a known gay individual and profanities, according to the court. It gave no further details.

On May 8, the day before Russia celebrates its victory over Nazi Germany, Malyev posted the image of a dead body with a caption that read "how to correctly wear the St. George ribbon."

The court said the latter post showed "disrespect for society and the days of military glory and memorable dates of Russia" and was an "insult" to World War II veterans.

Malyev has "partially" admitted guilt, the court said. He faces up to five years in prison if convicted.

Russian President Vladimir Putin has largely snuffed out freedom of expression, clamping down hard on individuals who contest the state's official view of World War II as well as the current invasion of Ukraine.

In 2014, Putin outlawed the dissemination of "false information about Soviet activities" during World War II and seven years later [outlawed criticism of veterans](#) of that war.

In December 2022, he signed into law a bill [criminalizing the desecration of the St. George ribbon](#) with a punishment of up to five years in prison.

The ribbon dates back to 1769, when Russian Empress Catherine the Great established the Order of St. George. The medal was attached to a ribbon of black and yellow -- later orange.

In 1945, the Soviet Union resurrected the orange-and-black ribbon for a medal to celebrate victory over Nazi Germany in World War II.

The colors then became part of annual May 9 Victory Day celebrations in the Soviet Union and then in Russia, and they were handed out en masse in Russia starting in 2005.

Nearly a decade later, activists supporting Russia's 2014 seizure of Ukraine's Crimea and backing of separatists in eastern Ukraine began using the ribbon as a symbol, and it is now widely associated with the Russian aggression in Ukraine.

Ukraine banned the St. George ribbon in 2017.

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