



# ELDH European Association of Lawyers for Democracy & World Human Rights

WITH LAWYERS  
IN 22 COUNTRIES

EJDM Europäische Vereinigung von Juristinnen & Juristen für Demokratie und Menschenrechte in der Welt

EJDH Asociación Europea de los Juristas por la Democracia y los Derechos Humanos en el Mundo

EJDH Association Européenne des Juristes pour la Démocratie & les Droits de l'Homme

EGDU Associazione Europea delle Giuriste e dei Giuristi per la Democrazia e i diritti dell'Uomo nel Mondo

Equality Privacy Social Rights  
No Racism Peace No Torture No War  
Self-Determination of Peoples Democracy  
Human Rights Rights of Migrants

Bologna, Düsseldorf, London, Vienna, 06 June 2023

## European Lawyers: grave concern at the prosecution of the human rights activist Oleg Orlov

The European Lawyers for Democracy and Human Rights (ELDH), with members in 22 European countries, expresses its grave concern at the prosecution of the human rights activist Oleg Orlov, who will be brought to a criminal Court on 8 June 2023, and faces three year imprisonment.

Orlov is co-chair of the Memorial Human Rights Centre. He is an outstanding member of Memorial, one of the leading Russian human rights organisations. He saw the horrors of war with his own eyes in the First Chechen War, and has fought for peace and justice for more than 40 years.

Russia has now been expelled from the Council of Europe and the ECHR, on 16 September 2022. Orlov cannot appeal there.

In 2022, Memorial received the Nobel Peace Prize along with Ukrainian and Belarusian human rights activists,

Orlov is being persecuted for his anti-war views.

On 21 March 2023, at about 7 a.m., the security forces searched the apartment of Orlov and those of eight other members of Memorial. This happened as part of a criminal case on the “rehabilitation of Nazism”, pursuant to Part 2 of article 354.1 of the Russian Criminal Code.

However, on the same day, the Investigative Committee of the Russian Federation opened a criminal case against Orlov for “repeated discrediting” of the Russian army. The maximum punishment is imprisonment for up to 3 years.

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Orlov is now under house arrest for an unspecified period. After interrogations, they were all released with the status of witnesses.

A case of “re-discrediting” can be initiated if a person already has at least one court decision that has entered into force under a similar article of the Administrative Violations Code during the year.

In 2022, a Russian court convicted Orlov five times for organizing and participating in anti-war pickets. Twice he was charged with an article on “discrediting the armed forces”. In one case, Orlov held a one person picket in the centre of Moscow with a poster "Crazy Putin is pushing the world towards nuclear war." In the second case, he was detained on Red Square with a poster “USSR 1945 is a country that fought against fascism. Russia 2022 is a country where fascism has won.”

A criminal case against Orlov was initiated under the criminal article on “repeated discrediting of the army”, contrary to Part 1 of Article 280.3 of the Criminal Code. The reason is a post on Facebook with a translation of an article by Orlov, published in the French edition of “Mediapart”.

The Orlov case is largely based on the conclusion of a linguistic expertise prepared by Kryukova and Tarasov, a mathematics teacher and translator from the state-affiliated Centre for Sociocultural Expertise. The same experts found back in 2021 that the Memorial Human Rights Centre “justifies extremism and terrorism.” The Prosecutor General's Office attached their certificate to the lawsuit for the liquidation of the Human Rights Centre.

There are only two witnesses in the case - representatives of the Russian military veterans movement. Their testimonies are repeated word for word. According to witnesses, Memorial created a “system of information weapons” that “led to the collapse of the USSR” and now threatens the Russian Federation. And the article allegedly became familiar to them “during the analysis and evaluation of Orlov's activities.”

- ELDH demands that the criminal case against Orlov should be terminated, as it has no basis on the evidence, even in accordance with Russian law.
- We call on members and supporters of ELDH to sign the support letter here: <https://chng.it/wdsV9bsrcj>
- Members and supporters should share the video about Oleg Orlov on their social networks: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=odPAfRtNysc>
- If any member or supporter is in Russia, we urge them to come support Oleg Orlov on 8 June at 15:00 at the address of the Court: str. Zoya and Alexander Kosmodemyanskie, 31k2, room 425. Voykovskaya metro station.