



RSF REPORTAR
UTAN GRÄNSER



**Persecution of
environmental activists
in Russia and Belarus
before and after Russia's
military invasion**

WEBINAR #4

Speakers

Marina Dubina

Ecohome



1. 2020 events and subsequent repressions
2. Civil society purges
3. Blocking media within Belarus
4. Extremists
5. Trends



Vitaly Servetnik

Environmental Crisis Group

1. Situation in Russia: Context
2. Pressure in 2022
3. Overview: Pressure on enviro-activists using “antiwar” laws
4. Resistance is not useless!

Recommendations



Belarus in 2020



Photo: tut.by

1

Events in 2020 and subsequent repressions



2020

searches,
detainments,
arrests...

Медиазона Беларусь
<https://mediazona.by/news/2023/07/27/green-party>

Верховный суд ликвидировал партию «Зеленые»

27 июл. 2023 г. — Верховный суд ликвидировал партию «Зеленые», пишет «Позірк» со ссылкой на источник. ... В начале

euroradio.fm
<https://euroradio.fm/minyust-likvidiruet-zoozaschitn...>

Минюст ликвидирует зоозащитную организацию ...

6 дней назад — Министерство юстиции решило ликвидировать зоозащитную организацию помощи бездомным животным SaveUs. На своей странице в Instagram ...

В «Ахове птушак Бацькаўшчыны»
прошел обыск, а «Экодом»
ликвидировали

(NGO "Protection of Batkaushchyna Wildlands"
searched and NGO Ecodom liquidated)



2

Civil society purges

1402

NGOs liquidated or self-dissolved

≈ 110

Environmental NGOs





Aarhus Convention

- Persecution of anti-nuclear activists
- Audit and liquidation of Ecohome

21.06.2021



Special Rapporteur on Environmental Defenders under the Aarhus Convention



*Michel Forst
Geneva, 21 October 2021*

Photo: UN Geneva



Political Prisoners

1510 Current political prisoners

*they include environmental activists, NGO representatives,
and community leaders*



Viktor Fenchuk



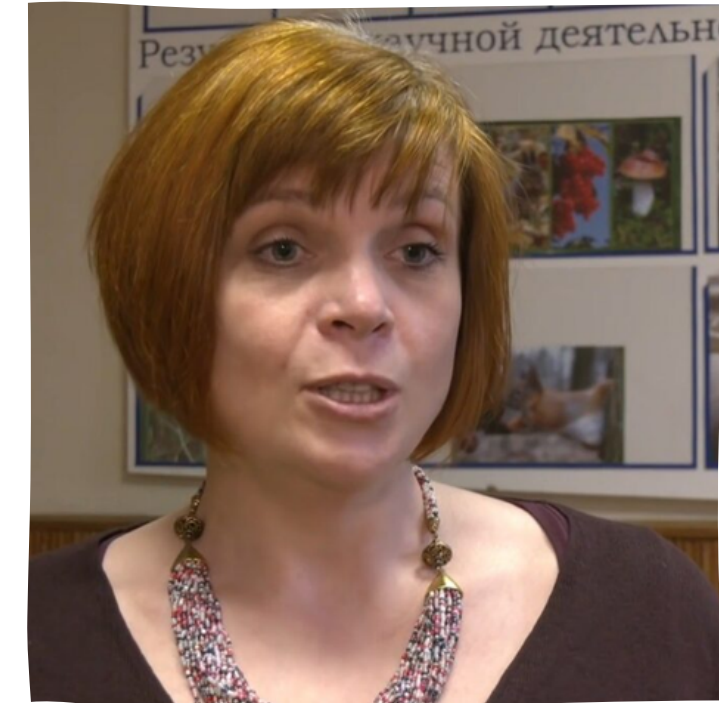
Evgeny Rubashko



Aleksandr Belov



Anna Skrigan



Artyom Solovei



Stepan Latypov



Evgeny Merkis



Andrei Kuznechik

Photo: prisoners.spring96.org, MAYDAY TEAM





Photo: social media

Pavel Nozdrya

- Recognized political prisoner
- 2 years in prison

He was accused of allegedly transmitting a photo of Russian military equipment to the “Belarusian Grove” Telegram channel.





Chernobyl Way, Vilnius 2022

Photo: Belstat

3

Blocking mass media within Belarus

Including environmental media

Тип распространяемой с нарушением закона информации	Ложные сообщения об актах терроризма или иную недостоверную общественно значимую информацию, распространяемую под видом достоверных сообщений, которая создает угрозу причинения вреда жизни и (или) здоровью граждан, имуществу, угрозу массового нарушения общественного порядка и (или) общественной безопасности либо угрозу создания помех функционированию или прекращения функционирования объектов жизнеобеспечения, транспортной или социальной инфраструктуры, кредитных организаций, объектов энергетики, промышленности или связи.
Описание распространяемой с нарушением закона информации	Информационные материалы, содержащие недостоверную общественно значимую информацию о проводимой Вооруженными Силами Российской Федерации специальной военной операции, ее форме, способах ведения боевых действий, потерях Вооруженных Сил Российской Федерации и жертвах среди мирного населения. Подобные публикации могут способствовать дестабилизации обстановки, а также созданию условий для массовых нарушений общественного

Скриншот уведомления

Green Portal received warning from Roskomnadzor



4 Extremists

▼ NGO Ecohome declared extremist formation by Belarusian KGB

Creation, participation, assistance, financing, training of extremists can result in 2-10 criminal sentences



▼ Ecohome, Green Portal publications declared extremist materials



ЗЯЛЁНЫ
ПАРТАЛ

Storage or distribution - administrative responsibility



5

Trends

18 July 2022 – Belarus exits the Aarhus Convention

12 October 2022 – Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights denounced

17 August 2023 – Belarus exits the Bern Convention





Screenshot: help-eco.info

2016-2018

- Kushtau (Bashkortostan)
- Shies (Arkhangelsk, Komi Republic)
- Square in Ekaterinburg



2

Pressure in 2022

Over 300 new incidents of pressure against more than 239 environmental activists and 19 organizations in 25 regions across Russia. Two other regions saw increased pressure in criminal episodes.

≈ 47

Activists were attacked and injured with varying degrees of severity. The personal property of at least five people was damaged.

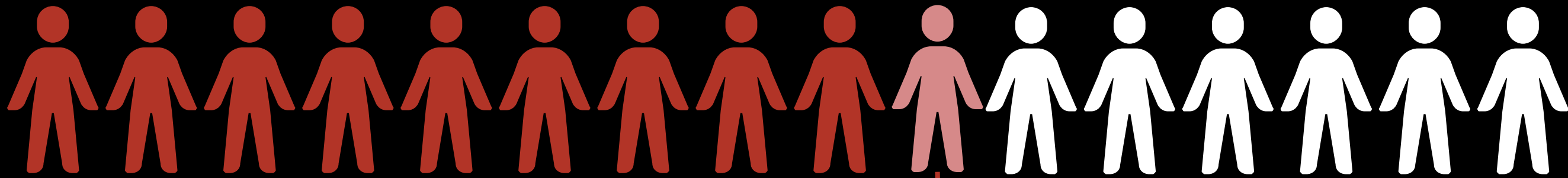
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Activist committed suicide likely as a result of pressure.



16

Criminal cases against environmental activists
developed in 2022



9 activists were sentenced

7 of which received real sentences in penal colonies

1 - Received a suspended sentence

1 - Placed under custodial restraint

One enviro-activist was freed

In 2022, at least 261 administrative offense reports were drawn up against environmental defenders. Total fines imposed on activists for administrative offenses amounted to at least 2,479,000 rubles.



1

Situation in Russia: Context

Environmental
Crisis Group



2000

Elimination of the State Ecology Committee

- Increased pressure on civil society
- Weakening of environmental law

2012

Pressure on the institutionalized environmental community

- 39 (38) environmental foreign agents
- 4 NGOs + 2 people remain on the registry
- 5 (7) have been removed from the registry
- 28 closed



Is a serious problem in our society?

% surveyed, September 2022

■ Is a serious problem

■ Significance is exaggerated

■ Hard to say

Bad ecology, environmental pollution, garbage disposal



Dense development, logging parks, destruction of green spaces



Domestic violence, violence against women in the family



Arbitrariness of law enforcement agencies, violence and torture of detainees and prisoners



Persecution of dissent related to government policies



Blocking and censorship on the Internet, harassment for social media engagement

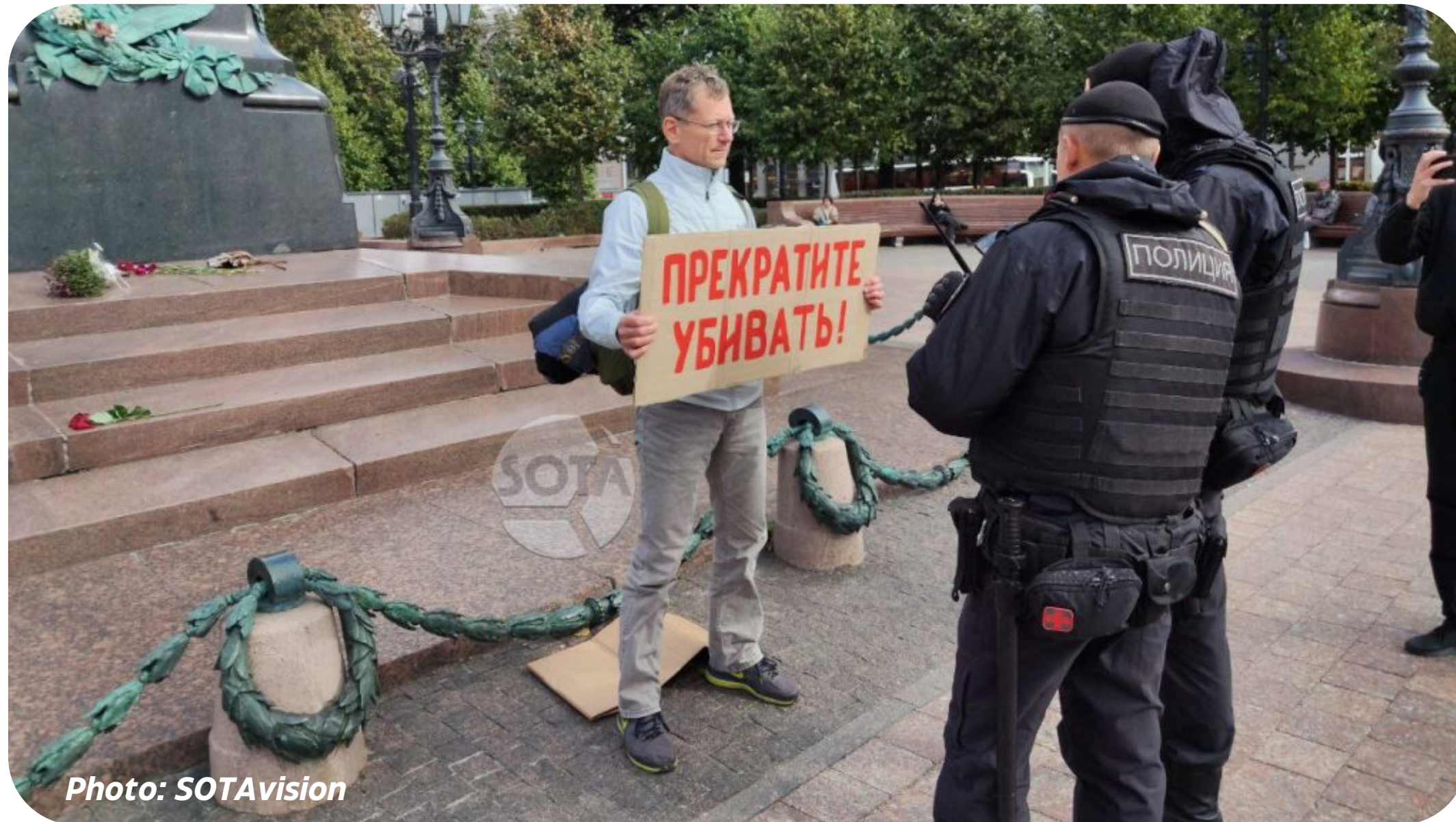


Infringement of freedom of speech, censorship in the media, state TV stations, newspapers



3

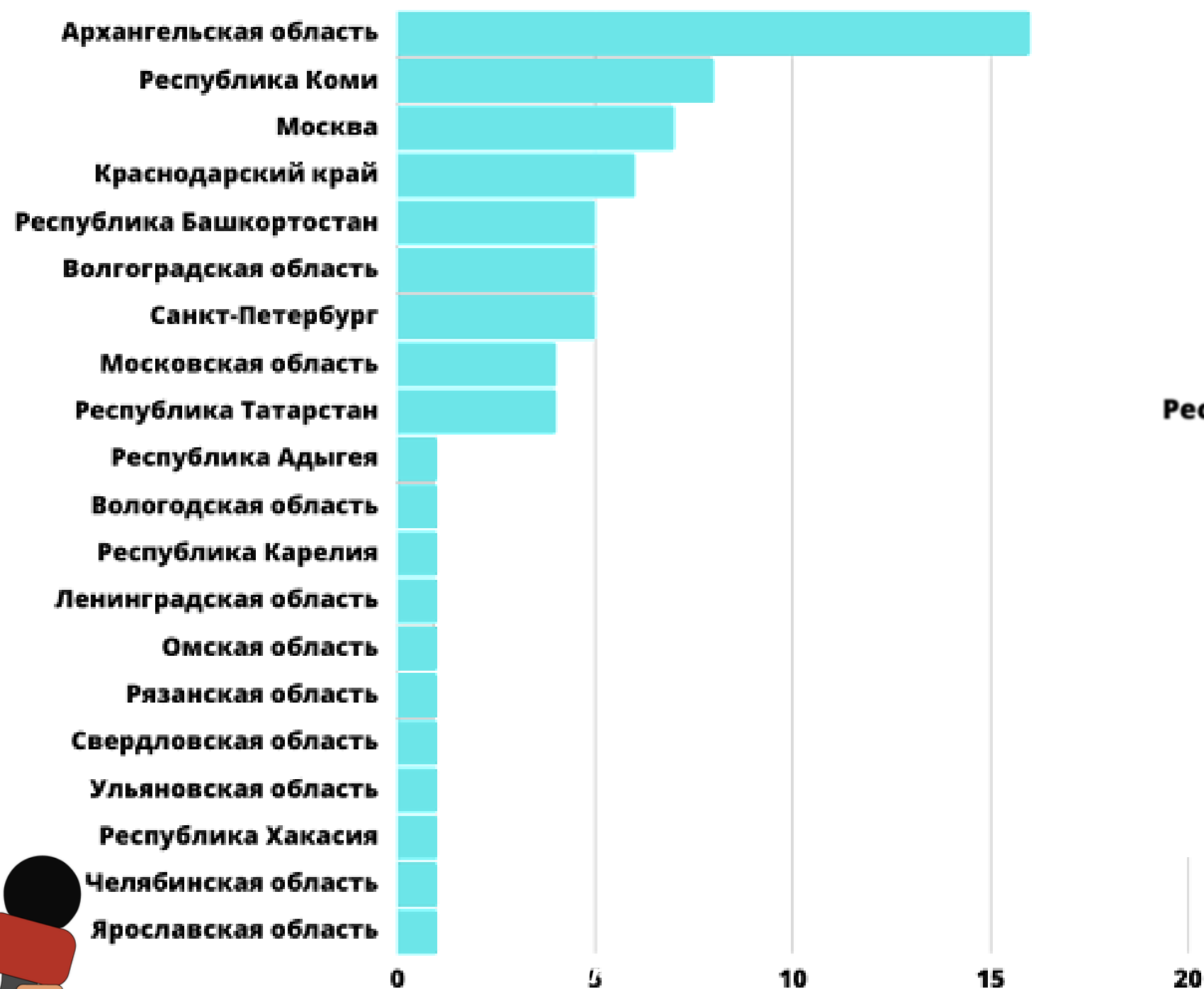
Review of pressure on environmental activists using “anti-war” articles



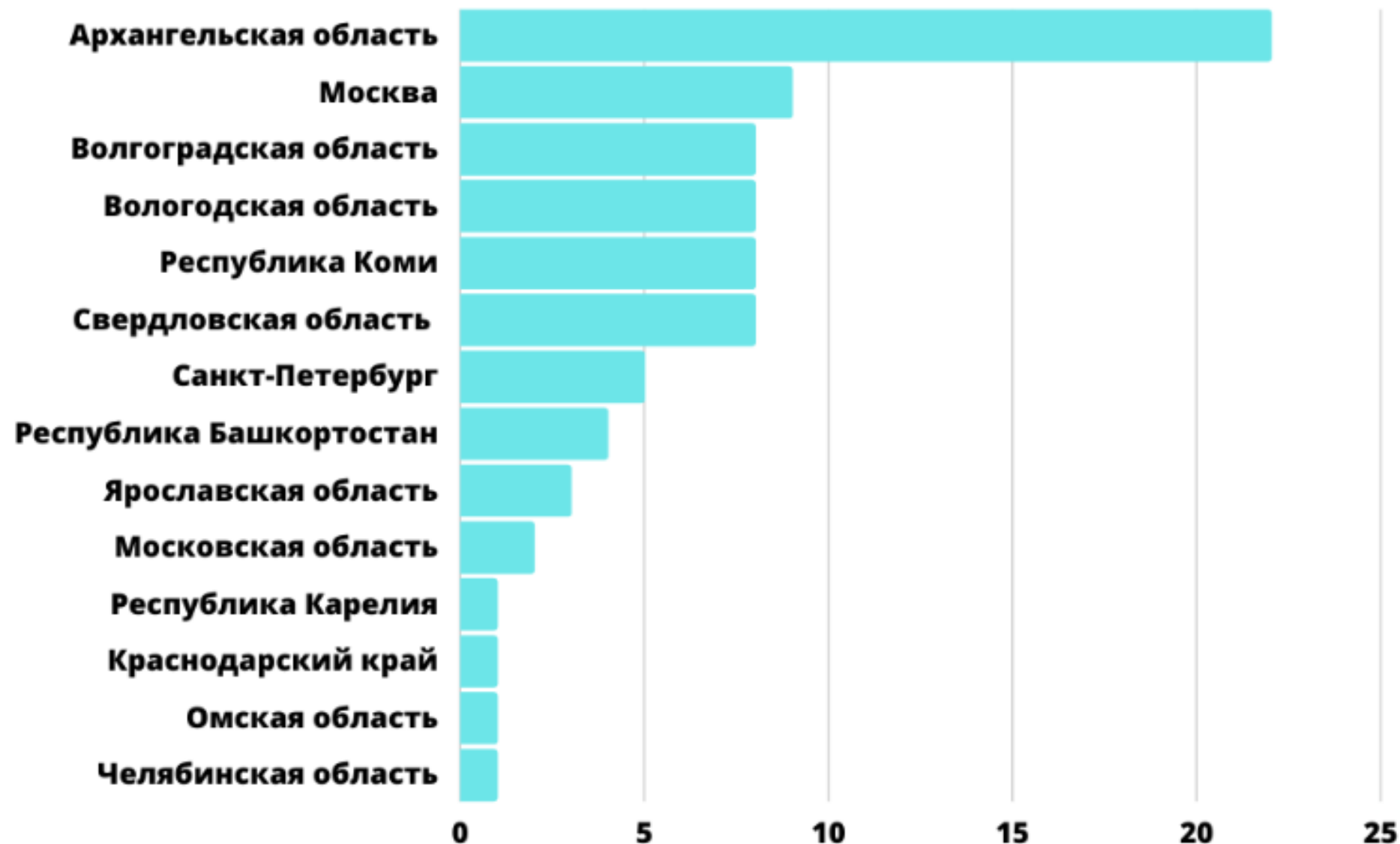
*Environmental activist
Konstantin Fokin in Moscow*



Environmental activists accused of antiwar activities by region



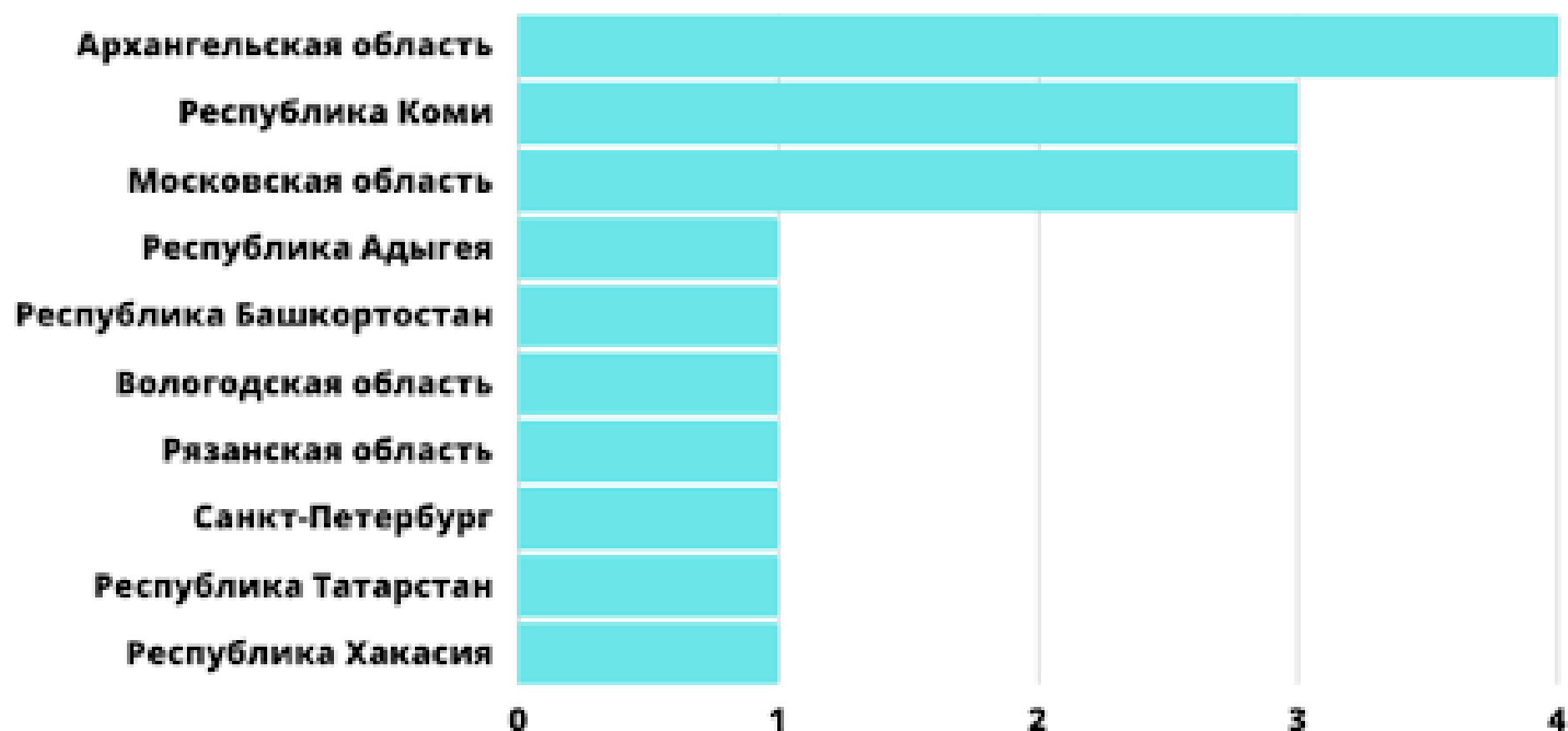
Screenshots: help-eco.info



Total number of administrative offensives for antiwar activity by region



Total number of criminal cases for anti-war activity by region



Screenshot: help-eco.info

6

Environmental activists were sentenced in 9 criminal cases

8 environmental activists in 7 regions continue to be prosecuted in 8 criminal cases



4

Resistance is not useless!

50 enviromental victories in 2022

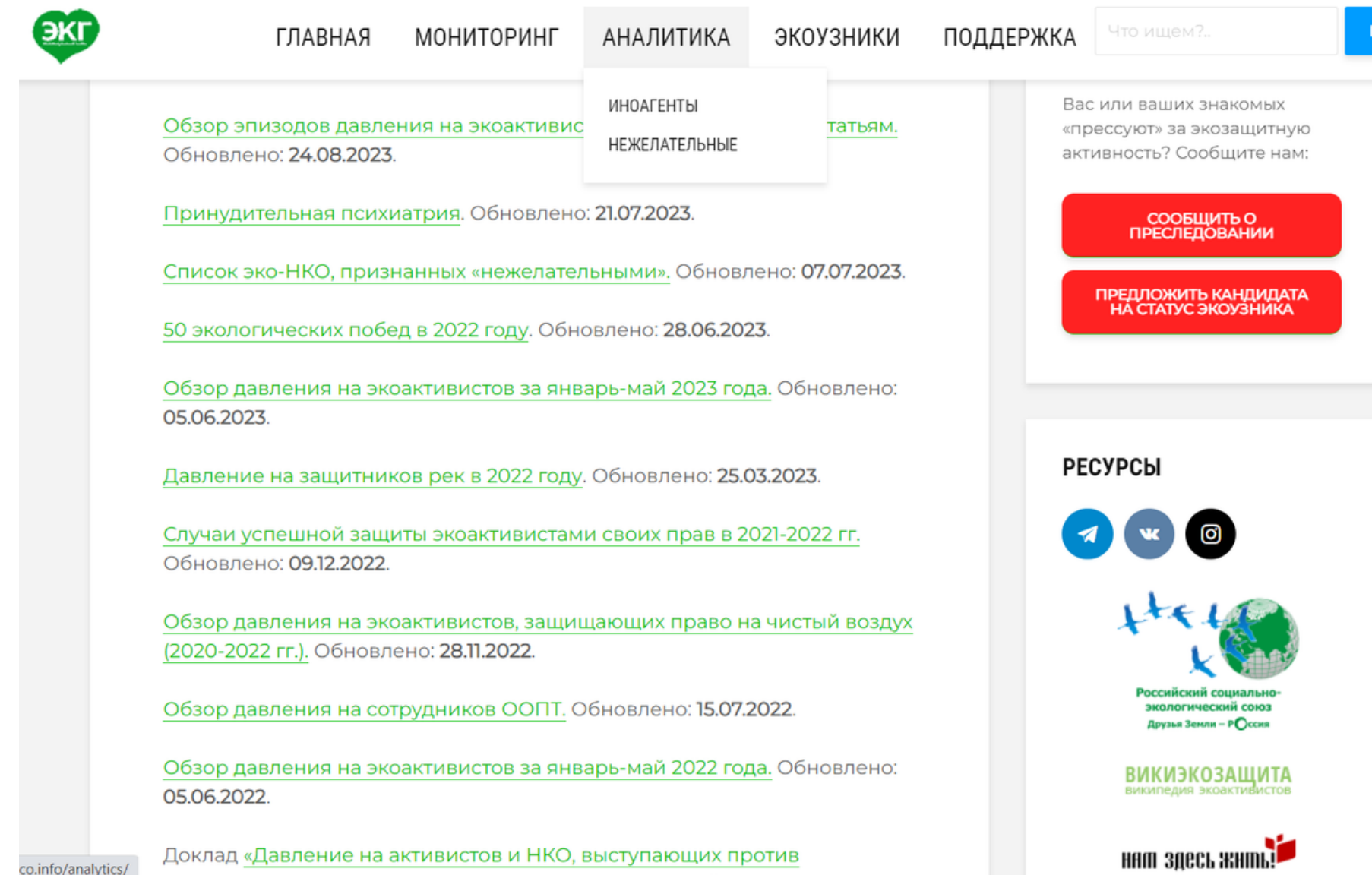


Successful defense of rights by environmental activists in 2021-2022

In 2021 and ten months of 2022, 31 activists from 16 regions managed to protect their rights. Environmental activists from Bashkortostan and the Tambov Oblast managed to have the attacks investigated and the perpetrators brought to justice. Over the course of two years, two criminal cases and 12 administrative cases initiated against nature defenders were dropped, and four fines were cancelled.



Recommendations



**Environmental Crisis Group
is a tool for journalists and
researchers**

How can I support?



Friends of the Earth - Norway

Thank you for your attention!



<https://uwecworkgroup.info/>

We love to hear from you.



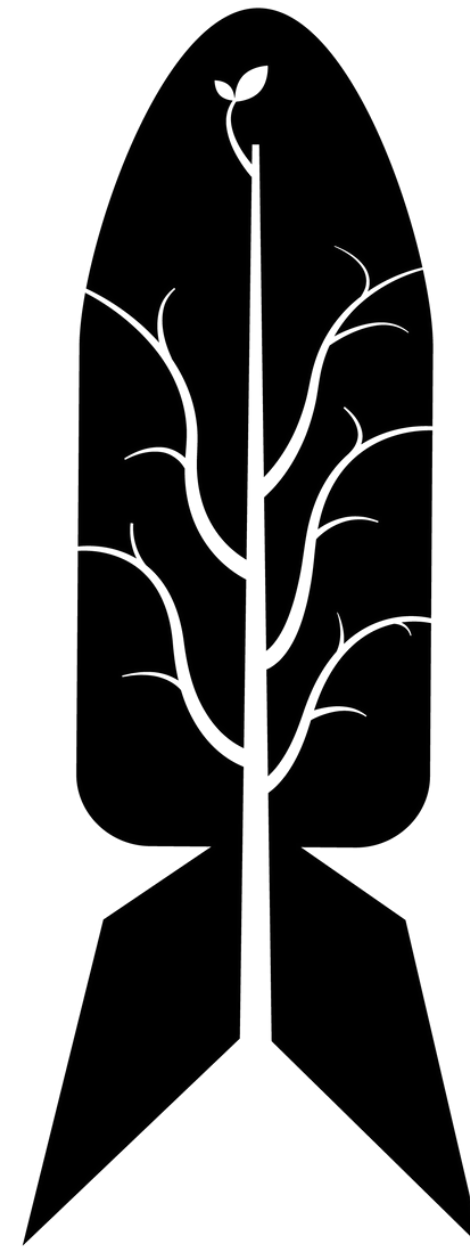
[*editor@uwecworkgroup.info*](mailto:editor@uwecworkgroup.info)



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**U W
E C**

Ukraine War
Environmental
Consequences
Work Group