

URGENT ACTION

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER UNDER HOUSE ARREST

On 23 January, Anastasia Shevchenko, an Open Russia human rights defender from Rostov-on-Don, in southern Russia, was put under house arrest and may face up to six years in prison if convicted. This is the first time the Russian authorities have opened a criminal case under the repressive “undesirable organizations” law. It is a worrying precedent and could open the floodgates to the prosecution of hundreds of Open Russia members across the country. Anastasia Shevchenko is a prisoner of conscience. She must be immediately and unconditionally released.

TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER

Aslan Garunovich Huade
Head of the Investigation Department for
Rostov Oblast
13/2, Beregovaya Street
Rostov-on-Don, 344082
Russian Federation
Fax: +7 (863) 227 0193
Online contact form:
www.rostov.sledcom.ru/references
Instagram and Facebook: suskrnd

Dear Head of the Investigation Department,

I am writing to express my grave concern for the detention of Anastasia Shevchenko, a prominent human rights defender in Rostov-on-Don.

On 21 January, Anastasia Shevchenko, a Coordinator with the Otkrytaya Rossiya (Open Russia) movement- which promotes human rights, rule of law and government accountability- was arrested and accused of “repeated participation in the activities of an undesirable organization” under article 284.1 of the Russian Criminal Code. On 23 January, Rostov-on-Don’s Leninsky court rejected a bail plea and put her under house arrest pending trial.

By prosecuting Anastasia Shevchenko for the mere fact of her participation in the peaceful activities of a public association, the Russian authorities are in violation of both their obligations under international human rights law as well as the Russian Constitution which guarantees Anastasia Shevchenko’s right to freedom of expression and association.

I call on you to use your authority to ensure the immediate and unconditional release of Anastasia Shevchenko from house arrest and an end to her criminal prosecution.

Yours sincerely,

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Anastasia Shevchenko is a prominent human rights defender. As well as working with Open Russia, she has volunteered at other human rights organisations, including Amnesty International, and pro-democracy groups.

On 21 January, Anastasia Shevchenko was arrested and accused of “repeated participation in the activities of an undesirable organization.” Simultaneously, police raided the homes of seven other Open Russia activists in Rostov-on-Don, Kazan and Ulyanovsk (Central Russia).

This is not the first time Anastasia Shevchenko, a single mother of three, has been targeted for her peaceful human rights work. In 2018, she was fined numerous times in connection with her work with Open Russia.

The “undesirable organizations” law - under which Anastasia Shevchenko is being charged - makes it a punishable offense to take part in any activities of a foreign organization designated as “undesirable” by the Office of the Prosecutor General if it deems that the organisation poses a threat to the country’s “constitutional order, defence potential or state security”. The respective decision effectively outlaws any activities by, or any cooperation with, such an organisation in Russia. The law, adopted in May 2015, is part of the Russian authorities’ ongoing crackdown on freedom of association and expression (see details here: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/eur46/2223/2015/en/>). It has been used arbitrarily to banish a number of foreign organisations, most of them civil society funders, from Russia.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Russian, English

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 7 March 2019.

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN: Anastasia Shevchenko (she)