

Liberty Is Not a Crime

Joint Statement of Libertarian Parties and Organizations in Solidarity with the Persecuted Libertarians of Russia
— 28 July 2026

This July, the Russian state claimed that Russian libertarians are somehow “foreign agents”. There are two Libertarian Parties in Russia, and the Ministry of Justice added **both** to its registry: the party chaired by Marina Matsapulina on 17 July, and the party chaired by Sergei Karnavsky on 24 July.

Being proclaimed a “foreign agent” in today’s Russia means many things. You cannot take part in electoral campaigns, engage in educational activities, or organize public events. What you do not need, however, is to be an actual agent of any foreign power. The Ministry cites the following grounds: the parties oppose the “special military operation” (that is, the war in Ukraine), criticize the Russian authorities and elections, and count among their members people already listed as “foreign agents” themselves.

Party membership itself is now treated as an offense — the libertarian movement as such is being outlawed.

The Libertarian Party of Russia (founded in 2008, split in two in 2020) is one of the oldest libertarian movements in Europe. Though denied official registration time and again, the parties organized **Russia’s largest peaceful demonstrations in a decade**, ran candidates in local elections — and won some — and built independent libertarian media and education outlets.

For this peaceful work, Russian libertarians are paying a heavy price. The movement’s most active members have lived in **forced exile** since the war began in 2022, while those remaining in Russia have faced years of coordinated searches, detentions, and prosecutions [see Annex]. The “foreign agent” status can and often does lead to criminal liability, and is frequently a prologue to designation as an “undesirable” or “extremist” organization, criminalizing the very association with the parties. Under this pressure, both parties have been forced to announce, after nearly two decades of peaceful work, the suspension of all their activities, stating that they can no longer guarantee the safety of their supporters inside Russia.

We, the undersigned libertarian parties and organizations, therefore declare:

- 1. We condemn** the designation of both Libertarian Parties of Russia as “foreign agents” — an act of political repression against a peaceful pro-liberty movement, under a “foreign agent” legislation that is nothing but an instrument for silencing dissent.
- 2. We express our full solidarity** with all the persecuted libertarians of Russia — with Marina Matsapulina, Sergei Karnavsky, and all members of both parties, whether in exile or still in Russia.
- 3. We call on our national governments, the European Commission, and Members of the European Parliament**, in particular the Subcommittee on Human Rights (DROI), to recognize the persecution of Russian Libertarian Party members as political persecution within the meaning of the 1951 Refugee Convention, and to facilitate asylum visas and humanitarian pathways for those at risk.
- 4. We reaffirm** that advocating individual liberty, free markets, peace, and constitutional government is a crime neither in Russia nor anywhere else.

When an authoritarian regime attacks one liberty movement, it attacks them all. We stand with our Russian colleagues.

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Signatories

1. **Parti Libertarien** (France) — Vadim Asadov, President — partilibertarien.fr
2. **Partido Libertario** (Spain) — Jorge Martin, Secretary General — p-lib.es
3. **Girchi** (Georgia) — Herman Szabó, Spokesperson — girchi.com
4. **Le az Adók 75%-ával Párt** (Hungary) — Áron Ecsenyi, President
5. **Partido Libertario Mx** (Mexico) — Victor Hugo Becerra, President — partidolibertario.mx
6. **Nepal Liberal Party** (Nepal) — Dr. Sushil Paudel, General Secretary — liberal.org.np

Parties and organizations wishing to join this statement may contact: contact@partilibertarien.fr

Annex — Examples of documented cases of repression (non-exhaustive)

2018 — Arrest of the organizers of an authorized rally. After a demonstration of several thousand people against the pension reform on Sakharov Avenue in Moscow, police arrested LPR chairman Sergei Boyko and the hosts of the event. interfax.ru

July 2019 — Arrest inside Moscow City Hall. LPR negotiator Mikhail Svetov was detained as he left the Moscow mayor's Department of Regional Security, where he had been negotiating the authorization of a rally for the admission of independent candidates. He was immediately sentenced to 30 days of administrative detention. svoboda.org

November–December 2019 — First wave of coordinated searches. Security forces raided the homes of key party members — Mikhail Svetov, LPR chairman Sergei Boyko, deputy secretary of the Moscow committee Igor Efremov and other activists — on the pretext of a criminal case over a 2012 social media post. All computers, servers and digital media were seized; interrogations lasted up to 12 hours. svoboda.org · currenttime.tv · interfax.ru

April 2021 — Arrests for tweeting about rallies in support of Alexei Navalny. LPR members from more than 10 regions were detained at the protest rallies; some spent the night at police stations. A few days later, Mikhail Svetov was arrested for 9 days and his house searched over a 2019 Instagram post. Sergei Boyko was arrested and fined, and his house searched, for tweeting about the 21 April rally. LPR chairman Boris Fedyukin was detained for tweeting about the same rally. lenta.ru · meduza.io · tass.ru

May 2021 — Second wave of searches (“road-blocking case”, Art. 267 of the Criminal Code). Raids on LPR members in Moscow, Krasnoyarsk and other cities following the winter 2021 protests, targeting among others Igor Efremov and former press secretary Alexander Gud. novayagazeta.ru

March–April 2022 — Mass raids under the pretext of “telephone terrorism” (Art. 207). Around the anti-war protests, simultaneous raids took place in dozens of cities based on anonymous bomb threats attributed to activists without evidence. Marina Matsapulina, member of the LPR Federal Committee, was searched and detained in St. Petersburg and forced into exile upon release; in Samara, Boris Fedyukin was detained and his equipment seized; in Kazan, LPR member Timur Tukhvatullin and activist Nailya Mulaeva were raided; in Yekaterinburg, LPR member Stanislav Zharkov was detained. svtv.org · zona.media · novayagazeta.ru · ovd.info · svoboda.org

Ongoing repression of regional activists. Leaders and activists of LPR regional committees (St. Petersburg, Yekaterinburg, Novosibirsk, Ufa, Samara and others) have repeatedly received administrative detentions of 5 to 30 days for organizing pickets, distributing materials and taking part in public actions. interfax.ru

Since 2022 — Criminal cases and forced emigration. Criminal proceedings against the parties' leaders and spokespeople (including for “discrediting” the armed forces, “fake news” about the army, and non-compliance with “foreign agent” obligations) have forced most of the leadership and active members to leave Russia.

17 and 24 July 2026 — Both Libertarian Parties of Russia designated “foreign agents”. The Ministry of Justice cited, among other grounds, their opposition to the war in Ukraine. Any public association with the parties now carries legal risk. minjust.gov.ru · svoboda.org

July–August 2026 — Suspension of activities. Under this pressure, the Libertarian Parties of Russia announced the freezing of their activities after nearly two decades of peaceful work, stating they could no longer guarantee the safety of their supporters. Official announcements: x.com/lpr t.me/lpr t.me/lpr_tg