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▲ Lvl. 1

No state  
reply yet

**Russian Federation** n° 67/2019

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## Investigative Journalist Ivan Golunov, Known For His Investigations Into Political Corruption, Arrested For “Selling Drugs”

SOURCE OF THREAT ▶ State

CATEGORY  ▶ Detention and imprisonment of journalists

### NO STATE REPLY YET

**PARTNER:** Index, AEJ, CPJ, EFJ/IFJ, RSF

On 6 June 2019, investigative journalist Ivan Golunov was detained by police and accused of drug dealing. Golunov is a journalist with the online news website, Meduza, and he is also known for investigating political corruption and criminality in the city of Moscow. Meduza had recently received threats in relation to a story he was pursuing. At around 14.30 on 6 June 2019, Golunov was on his way to meet with a source when several policemen stopped him near Tsvetnoy Bulvar metro station in Moscow and searched his backpack. They told him that they found a package, which contained four grams of the synthetic stimulant mephedrone. Golunov denied that the package belonged to him. He was arrested and taken to the police station. Golunov is reported to have requested that swabs be taken of his hands and fingernails to prove that he had not been in contact with the drugs, but police refused to do so. Police also refused to forensically examine of the journalist's backpack. In a statement, police said they found more drugs and some scales in his apartment, and that they had opened a criminal investigation. If convicted Golunov could face a sentence of up to 20 years. According to information received, Golunov was deprived of his right to call his lawyer or colleagues more than 12 hours after his arrest. He was also physically assaulted by the police during the interrogation, after which police refused to call medics to address the injuries that he had sustained. On 7 June 2019, journalists picketed Moscow City's Police Headquarters in protest at Galunov's detention. Police subsequently began detaining the picketing journalists, twelve of whom have been briefly detained before being released. The CEO and editor-in-chief of Meduza published the following statement after Golunov's arrest: “We are convinced that Ivan Golunov is innocent. Moreover, we have reason to think that he is prosecuted for his journalistic activity. [...] Meduza will be closely watching every action of the investigators in Golunov case. We will find out whose will is behind the prosecution – and we will make this information public. We will defend our journalist with all available means”.

UPDATES

**22 Nov 2019:** On 11 November 2019, the Federal Investigative Committee announced that all documents related to the criminal prosecution of Ivan Golunov will be classified. The news came during a court hearing held in Moscow on a complaint filed with the Prosecutor General on 11 October 2019 by Golunov's lawyer, Sergei Badamshin, accusing investigators of failing to look appropriately into his client's wrongful arrest. Following the release of Golunov in June 2019, an investigation had been launched over potential wrongdoing on the part of the officers involved in Golunov's arrest, which led to the dismissal of the head of the Moscow police department's drug-control directorate and of the police chief in Moscow's western administrative region.

**13 Jun 2019:** On the 12 June 2019, a protest in solidarity with Ivan Golunov took place in Moscow. Approximately 1,200 protesters took to the streets to march to the city's police headquarters, holding signs and wearing t-shirts with the slogan "I am/We are Ivan Golunov". The march, which was not granted approval from municipal authorities in advance, was forcibly dispersed by riot police. Several hundred protesters – possibly as many as 549 – are understood to have been detained by Moscow police. About 40 journalists, from Russian and international news outlets, were among those detained. Several journalists reported showing their press cards to the police at the time of detention. The journalists were held in police stations for various periods of time; some for up to six hours. By 19:00 local time, most of the journalists are understood to have been released. Most were released without charge, but at least three journalists - Ilya Azar, Elizaveta Nesterova, and Evgeny Berg - were charged with "participation in an unsanctioned action that caused traffic disturbance".

**12 Jun 2019:** Russian police have dropped all charges against Ivan Golunov. The Russian Federation's interior minister, Vladimir Kolokoltsev, said the decision had been taken due to a lack of evidence. Kolokoltsev also said that some of the police officers that were involved in the case were being temporarily removed from duty pending an investigation "to assess the legality" of their actions. He said that he planned to ask President Vladimir Putin to dismiss two more senior police officials. Golunov was released from house arrest on Tuesday evening.

➔ **Meduza statement: Ivan Golunov is free**

**10 Jun 2019:** On 8 June 2019, the Nikulino district court in Moscow ordered that Ivan Golunov remain under house arrest until 7 August 2019, pending his trial.

➔ **RFE/RL article "Russian Investigative Reporter Placed Under House Arrest Pending Trial On Drug Charges"**



- ➔ **Transparency International statement (in Russian): "Заявление «Трансперенси» в связи с задержанием Ивана Голунова"**
- ➔ **EFJ statement: "The EFJ calls on the Russian authorities to immediately release journalist Ivan Golunov"**
- ➔ **Statement of the the Russian Journalists' and Media Workers' Union (JMWU): "Russia: investigation about Ivan Golunov classified"**
- ➔ **RSF statement: "Russia: Well-known Moscow reporter arrested on dubious drug charge"**

## **FOLLOW-UPS**



**10 Jun 2019** | The Secretary General of the Council of Europe calls on the Minister of Interior of the Russian Federation "to personally address this situation."

- ➔ **Statement of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe concerning Russian investigative journalist Ivan Golunov**



**07 Jun 2019** | Detention of investigative journalist Ivan Golunov in Russia deeply worrying says OSCE media freedom representative, calls on authorities to release him.

- ➔ **Statement by Harlem Désir**