

## Anti-press freedom laws in Russia

After Crimea was annexed in March 2014, its press became subject to draconian Russian laws and measures.

**Separatism:** Under Article 280.1, introduced into Russia's Criminal Code in [May 2014](#), anyone calling for separatism in the media can face [up to five years in prison](#). The vaguely worded law implies a ban on referring to Crimea as occupied, annexed by Russia, or as being in Ukraine.

**Soldiers' deaths:** [In May](#), President Vladimir [Putin issued a decree](#) that extended a ban on coverage of military casualty figures to peacetime. Under the decree, coverage of soldiers' deaths is considered a disclosure of state secrets and is punishable by [up to 20 years](#) in prison.

**Regulation:** The Russian media regulator [Roskomnadzor has power](#) to withdraw licenses from media outlets that it finds to be in violation of Russian law, including the [broad legislation on combating extremism](#). If two warnings are issued in a year, Roskomnadzor can [shut down](#) an outlet.

**Bloggers:** As of August 1, 2014, Russian bloggers with more than 3,000 daily visitors to their website or social networking platform are [required by law](#) to register as a media outlet. They have to follow the same provisions as Russian news outlets, and [failure to do](#) so could result in a fine of up to 500,000 rubles (\$8,700) and a 30-day suspension of blogging activities.

**Criminalized defamation:** When he returned to power in May 2012, Putin reinstated the [criminalized defamation](#) law his predecessor had [struck down](#) in 2011. According to the [criminal code](#), journalists or media outlets found guilty of defamation may face a fine of up to 5 million rubles or 480 hours of corrective labor.

**Internet censorship:** Russian authorities can demand that Internet providers block access to any website, without presenting a court order. The provision came into effect in February 2014, after Putin [signed a law](#) authorizing the prosecutor's office to restrict access to websites containing calls to mass disorder, extremist activity, or unauthorized mass rallies. Since its introduction, access to several [news websites critical of the Kremlin](#) have been blocked, according to reports.

*[Compiled from CPJ reports and news reports by Lydia Tomkiw, CPJ's 2015 Google Journalism Fellow]*