

## Closet on fire. More than 65 people have already been detained in cases of sabotage on railways in Russia, every third is a minor

Dima Shvets April 13, 2023, 10:40

Sabotage on the railway Texts infographics



Illustration: Anastasia Krainyuk / Mediazona



Railroad sabotage, which could impede the movement of trains with weapons, was talked about almost from the very beginning of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Many channels appeared that published instructions for the partisans and claimed responsibility for acts of sabotage, but the security forces began to report on the detentions of saboteurs only by the fall. They began to report on this especially actively after the appearance of new articles against saboteurs in the Criminal Code - since January, not a week has passed without detentions. Mediazona studied all the available reports of such cases and found out that they often follow the same scheme: a group of young people are detained for setting fire to a relay cabinet, which an unknown person asked them to do in a telegram for money.

### What we have learned from studying cases of sabotage on the railways

- Since the beginning of autumn, the security forces have reported the arrest of at least 66 people in cases of sabotage on railways in more than 21 regions of Russia.

- Almost all detainees are schoolchildren or students by age. A third of them are generally minors, the rest are under 25 years old (only a few people are older).
- The number of arrests has risen sharply since January 2023, after Russia expanded the punishment for sabotage (during this period, 51 out of 66 known defendants were detained).
- The most popular target is the relay cabinet, which contains the equipment that regulates the movement of trains (the cabinet appears in almost three-quarters of the cases).
- Cases are often initiated under lighter articles, but then they are usually reclassified as an article on a terrorist attack (205 of the Criminal Code) or sabotage (281 of the Criminal Code).
- Detentions reported by the security forces usually do not correlate with reports of partisan associations publicly claiming responsibility for acts of sabotage.
- A typical sabotage, according to the FSB, is the arson of a relay cabinet by a group of schoolchildren or students who received instructions and money from the "curator" for this sabotage.
- Anti-war motives in the messages of the security forces also sound, but much less frequently. In general, there are few details about such cases - both the authorities and relatives and defenders of the accused are reluctant to share them.

In early March, a court in Moscow **extended** the term in a pre-trial detention center for 20-year-old student Yevgeny Elizarov, who is accused of committing sabotage. According to investigators, on December 8 and 10, a student set fire to relay cabinets at the Moscow-Sortirovochnaya and Solnechnaya stations. Such cabinets usually contain equipment that regulates the movement of trains.

In the corridor for the start of the meeting (it was delayed for three hours), the bride, mother and brothers, who had come from Samara, Elizarov's hometown, were waiting. They did not communicate with the Mediazona correspondent, fearing that this could have a bad effect on the course of the investigation. The mother was only surprised that anyone was interested in the case of the young man who set fire to the metal cabinet after "someone wrote" to him.

While the judge was writing the decision, the convoy, with the permission of the investigator, allowed the student Elizarov to talk to the bride - and he congratulated the girl on the upcoming March 8 in verse.

"A wolf in love is no longer a predator," lawyer Rustam Temirsultanov joked. Judge Yevgenia Gorokhova extended the term of imprisonment for three months at once.

From the materials read out in court, it became clear that Elizarov pleaded guilty, and to continue the investigation, he would have to go to pre-trial detention center No. 1 in Krasnoyarsk, across half the country. Another criminal case is being investigated there about arson of cabinets on the railway, five young people (they are from 17 to 21 years old) have been detained in connection with it. Elizarov's lawyer declined to comment on whether these arrests were connected to the student's case.

In recent months, Russian security forces have increasingly reported arrests and criminal cases of sabotage on railways. "Mediazona" studied all available messages. As a rule, relay cabinets are called the target of saboteurs, those detained for less than 20 years (and often not even 18), the FSB is involved in the investigation, and charges are brought under articles on sabotage or a terrorist attack.

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## **At least 66 defendants in two dozen regions, two-thirds of them under 21**

At the end of January, the FSB **announced** the detention of three eighth-graders in Chekhov near Moscow, they were accused of damaging railway tracks (the secret service did not provide details). A day later, Moskovsky Komsomolets **wrote** that they

were again looking for a saboteur in Chekhov: “The train driver noticed a suspicious type scurrying around in a relay box near the Stolbovaya station.”

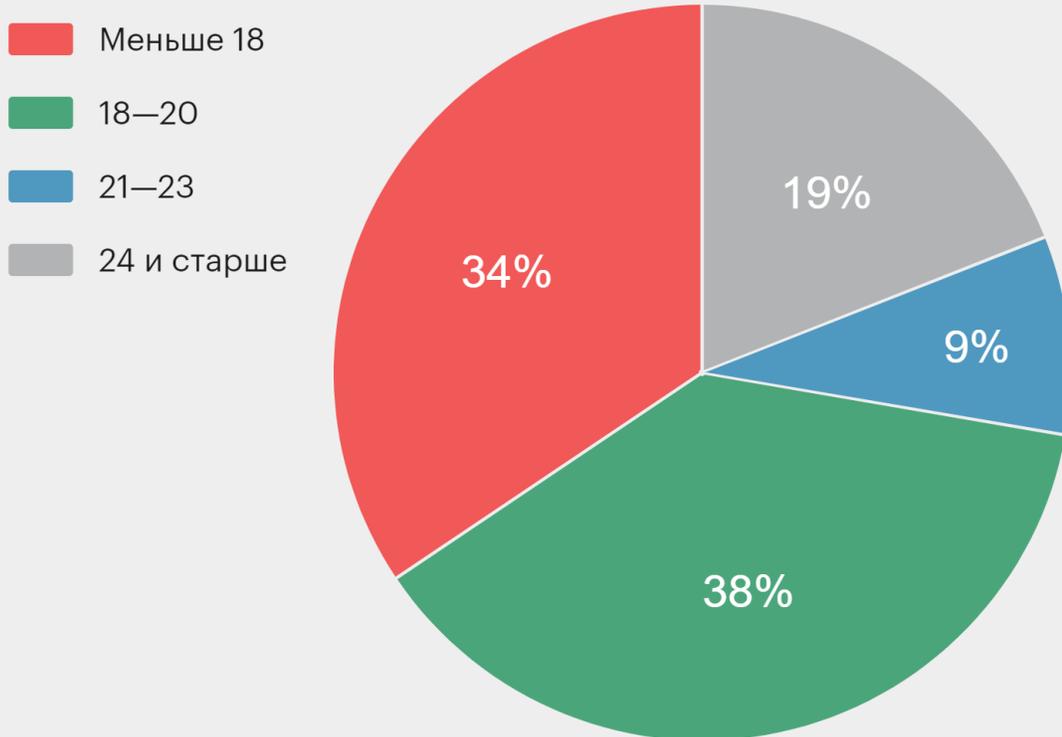
Three weeks later, the Kaliningrad media **wrote** about eight schoolchildren who set fire to a relay cabinet after a 15-year-old "student from one of the Kaliningrad schools received instructions and was promised a monetary reward for the work done."

Since the beginning of autumn, security officials, journalists and pro-government telegram channels have published dozens of reports about the arrests and even murders of suspected railroad saboteurs across Russia. Mediazona studied these reports and counted 66 people who, since last autumn, have become defendants in cases of acts of sabotage on railways. A total of at least 27 cases are being investigated (some with several accused).

At least the approximate age is known for 58 detainees out of 66: a third of them are minors (20 people), the rest are also very young (25 people aged 18 to 21) and only eight people are over 30 years old.

## Возраст задержанных по делам о диверсиях **Медиазона**

Большинству меньше 21 года, треть — несовершеннолетние



Данные: пресс-релизы силовиков, СМИ, «Медиазона». Возраст известен у 58 фигурантов

Often we are talking about groups of people: 13 singles and 14 groups of two to eight people are known.

Detentions for railway sabotage were reported in 21 regions of Russia, from the Kaliningrad region and Stavropol to Buryatia and the Krasnoyarsk Territory.

As a rule, a case of intentional damage to property is initially initiated (Article 167 of the Criminal Code), which is then usually reclassified as an article on a terrorist attack (Article 205 of the Criminal Code) or sabotage (Article 281 of the Criminal Code).

Responsibility for sabotage was significantly **expanded** at the end of last year. By analogy with terrorism, new articles have appeared that punish training and assistance in sabotage, as well as participation in a “sabotage community”. Almost all of the

new articles provide for punishment up to life imprisonment.

Putin **signed** the bill on December 29, 2022. After that, detainees for setting fire to equipment on railways became more frequent: 51 out of 66 known defendants have been detained since the beginning of January 2023.

## Медиазона

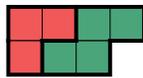
### Дела о диверсиях на ж/д



Сентябрь  
2022



Октябрь



Ноябрь



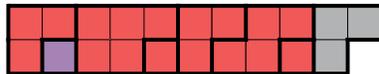
Декабрь



----- В УК включили новые статьи против диверсантов -----

Январь

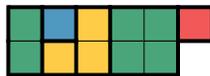
2023



Февраль



Март



Апрель



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Данные: пресс-релизы силовиков, СМИ, «Медиазона»

## Attack targets. The most common - relay cabinet

**Arson of relay cabinets is involved in 19 out of 27 known criminal cases.**

The most common target of railway sabotage, for which the security forces report on detention, is a relay cabinet. Arson of such cabinets with railway equipment was reported in 19 cases (out of 27 criminal cases known to Mediazona).

One of the public associations that claims responsibility for railroad sabotage is **the Combat Organization of Anarcho-Communists**. Its participants explained to Mediazona the choice of such a target for attacks: "Train signaling equipment is located in the cabinets. Destroying them allows, without creating risks for civilian trains, to slow down cargo transportation on ordinary lines (not military ones), since in the absence of signaling, trains must stop or go slower. Similarly, you can close the rails with a wire. At the same time, the anarchists say that they do not associate themselves with any of the arrested.

The authors of the [Rospartizan](#) channel call the damage to relay cabinets "an average task for a partisan." They clarify that in order to complete it, you need to figure out how to open the cabinet and make sure that the equipment inside burns out.

## Цели диверсий на ж/д

Медиазона

Что, по версии силовиков, атаковали задержанные

⚡ Релейный шкаф    🚧 Рельсы    ⚡ Тяговая подстанция  
⚠️ Пост секционирования    🚂 Локомотив



Данные: пресс-релизы силовиков, СМИ, «Медиазона».  
К 12 апреля силовики отчитались о 26 раскрытых диверсиях

Former machinist [Evgeny](#) explains to Mediazone that the electronics located, for example, in the [signaling](#) cabinets are responsible for the communication between locomotives, traffic lights and dispatcher control panels. This allows several trains to travel in the same direction on the same haul without the risk of collision.

“The failure of such a cabinet can slow down traffic for a day. Most likely, the blocking will not work, and until it is restored, the trains will run one at a time,” the former driver believes.

He clarifies that there are other equipment in such cabinets, but all of them are important: some are responsible for power, others for different sensors. When any blocking system is disabled, railroad workers "switch to a primitive system that allows trains to pass through an emergency place, but it takes much more time."

### A few more examples of cases of arson cabinets on the railway

**Yevgeny Gorbunov, Konstantin Kolesnikov and Daniil Safonov were arrested in Ulan-Ude** ; according to Mediazona, they are 20, 18 and 17 years old. They are accused of sabotage.

**In the Bryansk region, 25-year-old Dmitry Prokhorenko** was first arrested for 10 days for petty hooliganism, and then he **was sent** to a pre-trial detention center on a criminal case of sabotage.

**In the city of Gulkevichi in the Kuban , 19-year-old Leon Darsht was arrested** ; according to investigators, he set fire to him back in September. "Caution, news" **write** about the transformer, *Baza* - about **the post** of sectioning the contact network between Armavir and Kurganinsk. The young man is also believed to be involved in **setting fire** to a banner with a Z and the inscription "We do not leave our own." Accused of sabotage.

**In Saratov , two local residents were arrested** , they are suspected of **setting fire** to relay cabinets. **Shot called** their names: Samvel Poghosyan and Alexey Kochetkov. The security forces distributed **a video** in which a man with a smeared face says that he was looking for a job and someone wrote to him that "there is a job - damage to property", and sent a photo of cabinets near the railway.

## **Jumper on wires. "It's not sabotage at all, but stupidity"**

Shorting the rails, on the other hand, is a fairly rare target of sabotage, it appears in only a few known cases. Thus, 18-year-old Ilya Podkamenny from Irkutsk, according to **Shot**, was arrested after he "wrapped the rails with copper wire" and "attached sheets from a school notebook with an extremist message to the tracks." He is accused under four articles at once .

Former machinist Yevgeny tells Mediazone that this case "is generally difficult to comment on because of the incomprehensible description: what does it mean to "wrapped the rails" and how did it really happen?"

29-year-old resident of the Sverdlovsk region Vladlen Menshikov, according to investigators, first left the inscriptions "Azov", "APU", "No to war" on the entrance stele to the city of Rezh, and then pulled the wire between the two rails.

**Security forces published** the video of Menshikov's interrogation through the pro-government channel *Mash* . It is assembled from several excerpts, at the beginning the detainee says that he "has a negative attitude towards a special military operation", and then assures that he has thoughts of "seizing power by military means", "removing the government" and "eliminating the president".

The siloviki believe that Menshikov set up mail on the secure *Protonmail* service , contacted the Freedom of Russia legion and "gave his consent to participate" in the activities of this organization.

The young man was detained on September 27 at the St. Petersburg airport while flying to Belarus; his lawyer, Valentina Svintsitskaya, says he was on vacation and was going to see his friends. He was charged with three counts at once : attempted sabotage, justification of terrorism, and confidential cooperation with a foreign organization.

According to Svintsitskaya's lawyer, the client told her that he was forced to say the right words on camera - he does not admit guilt and insists that he has nothing to do with the mail with which they allegedly wrote to the Freedom of Russia legion.

"So far, the prosecution has not provided us with any evidence of involvement specifically in sabotage," says the defender. - The accusation is based on the "interrogation protocol" that was obtained by the investigation by exerting pressure on the detainee and without a defender - they wanted him to plead guilty to sabotage and connection with the Free Russia legion. In the pre-trial detention center, Vladlen was approached on walks and confidentially advised to admit that he wanted to act as a hooligan. And Vladlen can't even understand where exactly this place of the railway track is located - it's somewhere in the forest, he saw this place for the first time when the FSB officers showed him a photograph.

As for the jumper on the tracks, no matter who installed it, it would hardly lead to interruptions in the movement of trains, the former driver Evgeny is sure: "A rather stupid act that does not lead to a shutdown of the infrastructure."

"This, of course, is not sabotage at all, but stupidity," he insists. — The man took an aluminum wire and connected two parallel rails together. The jumper makes the haul or section of the track busy. That is, a red signal lights up in front of the train, which indicates that there is a train ahead. The driver stops the train, and if he does not know what is ahead, he goes on at a speed of 20 kilometers per hour. At this speed, he will detect a jumper, call a fitter, and everything will be fixed. It will all take some time, but not very much."

## **A more significant target is a traction substation. It will take a couple of days to recover.**

Four young people from the Penza region (from 16 to 24 years old), according to the security forces, set fire not only to the relay cabinet, but also to the electrical substation. The arson, as usual, was done "according to the instructions of an unknown person in *Telegram* , who promised them a monetary reward" - this version of the investigation **was given by** the Caution News channel.

The traction substation - if we are talking about it - the driver Yevgeny calls "a very important thing that maintains the necessary voltage and current in the network for 20-25 kilometers." In his opinion, its damage will completely stop traffic for some time, and the restoration of the substation will take from one to three days.

24-year-old Ruziboy Polvonov, 19-year-old Igor Moiseev and 18-year-old Nikolai Porvatkin were sent to a pre-trial detention center at the end of December, and 16-year-old Danil Nikitin, as Beware, News wrote, was "under supervision". However, in the

Railway Court of Penza, Mediazona was told that the young people were arrested for two months, but the period of arrest was not extended; perhaps now they are under a milder measure of restraint.

In early January, Interfax, citing an “informed source,” **wrote** that a court in Chelyabinsk had arrested three young people (two 18, one 19) suspected of attempted sabotage. Chelyabinsk residents were reportedly detained “when trying to disable the traction substation of one of the railway stations of the South Ural Railway.” According to the source, “a canister of gasoline, household gas cylinders, a burner and other items were seized at the scene.”

In November, it became known about the arrest in Bashkortostan of 18-year-olds Farrukhjon Zokirov, Mustafa Shakhbazov and Emin Sadygov, as well as his 17-year-old brother Amin - all were accused of committing a terrorist attack by an organized group.

“On the Chernikovka-Shaksha stretch (1634 km) of the Demskaya power supply distance, they set fire to a sectioning post, on the Dema-Checkpoint stretch (1606 km) they set fire to a control point for disconnecting the contact network and four relay cabinets,” RBC-Ufa wrote with reference to a law enforcement source.

The sectioning post, explains driver Eugene, is similar to a substation, but smaller and can be replaced faster. “They are mainly installed in blocks, so they can remove the old one and bring in the new one. But it takes time: the blocks on the road do not roll, they need to be transported from somewhere. And until they change it, there will be limited movement of diesel locomotives,” he adds.

The Black Bridge partisan association **wrote** about this case: “Predictability is the enemy of the partisan. This caught the fighters in Ufa, setting fire to the electronic “stuffing” of the railways. In a conversation with Mediazona, a member of the Black Bridge suggested that by the third arson, the security forces had assigned a patrol or set up an ambush.

## Railway Guerrilla Dictionary

**Cabinet** - a box with equipment, as a rule, alarm, centralization and blocking devices (SCB). Its damage hinders routing and slows down the movement of trains on the section.

**Jumper, or short circuit** - two parallel rails are connected by a wire, an alarm is triggered, and the speed of movement slows down. According to former machinist Yevgeny, who advised Mediazona, this type of sabotage is not very effective. But some partisans **think** otherwise.

**The traction substation** is an important part of the railway infrastructure that maintains voltage and current in the network. Its destruction may for some time completely stop the movement of trains, and replacement will take time.

**Sectioning post** - in terms of its functions, it is close to an electrical substation, but less important, there are more such posts, their replacement is simpler, but still requires some time.

## Telegram curators and fees for arson. The motives of saboteurs according to the security forces

The relay cabinets on the railways, according to the FSB, are so important that the Ukrainian special services, using blackmail and threats, force saboteurs under the guise of refugees to come to Russian territory in order to set them on fire. On February 15, the FSB **announced** the detention of a citizen of Ukraine and showed a video: 45-year-old Sergey Karmazin said that he left Ukraine for Poland, was recruited by the SBU and fulfilled all the requirements, because his daughter was “taken hostage” in Vinnitsa. The detainee says that he went to Latvia, where local security forces tested him on a lie detector, and then, under the guise of a refugee, they sent him to the Moscow region, and there he set fire to two relay cabinets.

Karmazin's case stands out from the series of other defendants in cases of arson of relay cabinets. Usually they detain Russians, and he is a citizen of Ukraine. Criminal cases are trying not to advertise too much, and then the FSB released a large video. Karmazin is 45 years old, and the vast majority of other defendants are very young people, often underage.

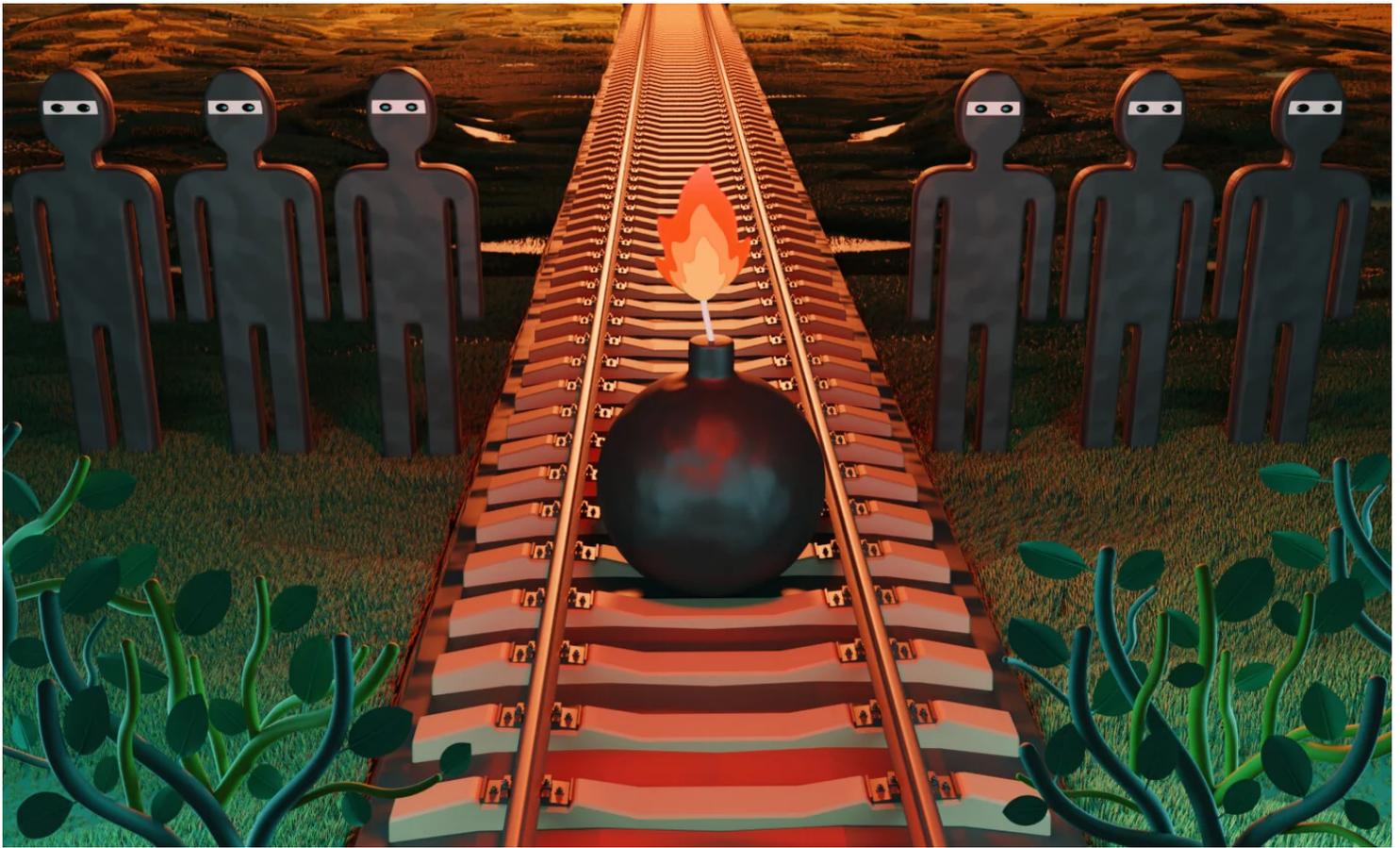


Illustration: Anastasia Krainyuk / Mediazona

The motive that the FSB ascribes to him is also knocked out of the general row - blackmail by the SBU.

As a rule, selfish motives are attributed to the arsonists: in the messages of the security forces almost always there is a mention of a "curator" who contacted the detainee and offered him money (usually very small) for setting fire to the closet, and for the report to which it was necessary to film the crime on video.

For example, schoolchildren detained in Chekhov, near Moscow, were paid 10,000 rubles for arson, as the security forces assure. In the Penza region, young people set fires "on the instructions of an unknown person in Telegram, who promised them a monetary reward." In Kemerovo, a 16-year-old teenager allegedly received 5,000 rubles for arson, which he spent on clothes: "I ordered a good jacket for myself, otherwise it was dirty, I ordered a belt for myself." And a resident of Saratov, in a video recorded by the security forces, says that he was looking for a job and someone wrote to him: "There is a job - damage to property" - and sent a photo of cabinets near the railway.

Some "curator", according to investigators, transferred money to Artem Begoyan from Cheboksary, at the time of his arrest in mid-December he was 18 years old. Begoyan is charged under two articles: the destruction of property and a terrorist attack committed by a group of people - according to the investigation, Begoyan and four accomplices set fire to a relay cabinet on the Alatyry-Svetotekhnika stretch.

Lawyer Adel Khaydarshin told Mediazona that his client is a student of an agricultural college and has already pleaded guilty, and before that he was mentally and physically pressured. "Employees have correspondence in Telegram, where the curator specifically gave instructions, described everything in detail, paid, and it was explained why this was all being done," says the defender. "All this was directed against the war, the acts were in support of Ukraine and against Russia."

According to the defender, Begoyan is an "ordinary guy" and does not belong to any subcultures, and the money received from the "curator" only covered the costs of arson. Recently, Begoyan refused the services of a defender, probably under pressure.

Another motive that the security forces occasionally mention when explaining the reasons for sabotage is that the detainees "share the ideas of Ukrainian Nazism." He sounded, for example, in the case of two Belgorod residents.

But sometimes, behind the reports of the security forces and the pro-Kremlin media, it is precisely the anti-war motives of the “protest against the NWO” that can be traced. For example, 19-year-old Leon Darsht from the Kuban, according to the security forces, **set fire to** a sectioning post in order to "stop the supply of military equipment and protest against Russia's military aggression on the territory of Ukraine." 22-year-old Alik Bagautdinov from Bashkortostan **set fire to** a relay cabinet "in order to stop Russia's special operation in Ukraine." And four young people aged 17-18 **committed** a series of acts of sabotage in Bashkortostan, because "they did not agree with Russia's policy of conducting a special operation in Ukraine."

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## Still burn. The case of a student from Karelia

In general, the authorities are extremely sparing in reporting on the detentions of alleged saboteurs and are not very active in talking about their motives. Some information, as a rule, can only be gleaned from Telegram channels that cooperate with the security forces.

The lawyers and relatives of the detainees whom Mediazona tried to contact also do not seek publicity and are afraid to talk to journalists.

In rare cases, it can be reliably said that the accused has some kind of political background. A 19-year-old student Nikita Klyunya from the Karelian city of Sortavala recently ended up in a pre-trial detention center. Security forces broke into his student dormitory on the night of March 7, later he was arrested under an article about organizing a terrorist attack. Klyunya was a member of the Civil Alliance of Russia social movement and, according to its chairman Oleg Filatchev, planned to run for the post of head of his native Salminsky rural settlement, and until then he helped local residents.

Filatchev suggests that his comrade is charged with setting fire to a closet at the exit from Petrozavodsk, a video of that incident was **published** on February 4 in the telegram channel of the Freedom of Russia legion. In the footage, a man in black is standing by a relay cabinet, then the cabinet goes up in flames and the door swings open. *An excerpt from the Lumen* song is overlaid on the video: "A huge blue whale cannot break the net. Surrender or not? But still burning!"

The post says that the sabotage was carried out by "unidentified activists from the Green Gendarmerie". According to a friend, Klyunya spoke disapprovingly of this episode: "He said that they were separatists and if, God forbid, such forces come to power in Karelia in the future, he will have to leave the region."

"According to the investigation, Nikita's guilt is confirmed by a certain message, which contains information about the manufacture of an explosive device. Nikita allegedly received the message, but did not send it. We have specifically specified this. The case also includes the testimony of two witnesses who made a deal with the investigation. They said that it was Nikita who organized them for arson," he **said**.

Timofey says that he saw Klyunya a couple of days before the arrest, they are childhood friends. According to him, Klyunya behaved as usual, said that he was trying to meet a girl, and argued that jobs should be created in the area and roads should be built, and the church should also be restored.

The Petrozavodsk city court, at the request of the investigation, prohibited anyone other than his lawyer Konstantin Koshcheev from visiting Klyunya in the pre-trial detention center. He refused to give a comment to Mediazona, but earlier **said** that his client "preliminarily admitted his guilt."

## Cases of sabotage have not yet reached the courts

Before the war in Russia, people were very rarely tried under the article on sabotage, at most a couple of sentences a year (only eight convicted from 2011 to 2021). A new wave of defendants has not yet reached the courts: regular detentions began only in the fall, and a significant part of them fell on January and February.

In the year since the invasion began, Mediazona has uncovered only a handful of sentences. **So, recently in the Belgorod region a sentence** was passed on two young people, they received 3.5 years in prison. Both were arrested in March. The FSB announced that the young people were going to commit sabotage, including on the railway.

At the end of March, the Crimean Supreme Court **sentenced** a local resident to 10 years under articles on committing one act of sabotage, preparing for another, and illegal trafficking in explosives. **Probably**, in his case, the arson of the military registration and enlistment office was considered sabotage (which is not typical, usually arsonists are judged by other articles).

Another **case** was dismissed in October due to the death of the accused. Information about the accused is hidden, the mediazone court press service refused to give details, so there are no grounds to connect him with the attacks on the railways. Like the case of three Crimeans **convicted** back in September. It is in Crimea that after the capture of the peninsula in 2014, the FSB regularly announces the detention of various saboteurs.

### **In two cases, the FSB reported on the murder of alleged saboteurs**

Twice the security forces reported the killing of alleged saboteurs during the arrest, both cases occurred in the North Caucasus Federal District. **In Kabardino-Balkaria, two people were shot dead** in October, who, according to the security forces, wanted to plant explosives under the railroad bridge. Then it was reported about the detention of a third suspect, their alleged accomplice.

On the Petrovsky farm in the Stavropol Territory, the FSB **claimed** that four people were planning a terrorist attack on a railway station; they were surrounded in the house, the saboteurs responded to the offer to surrender by shooting and were killed.

No other details about those killed could be found.

## **Partisans - in telegram and in life**

In Russia, there are several public anonymous associations that publish not only reports on sabotage, but also instructions. True, the reports of such partisan channels almost never correlate with the reports of the security forces about those detained for sabotage; these are, as it were, weakly intersecting sets.

Such associations began to report on sabotage **in the spring**, and the wave of arrests began in the fall and unfolded in full force only after the New Year.

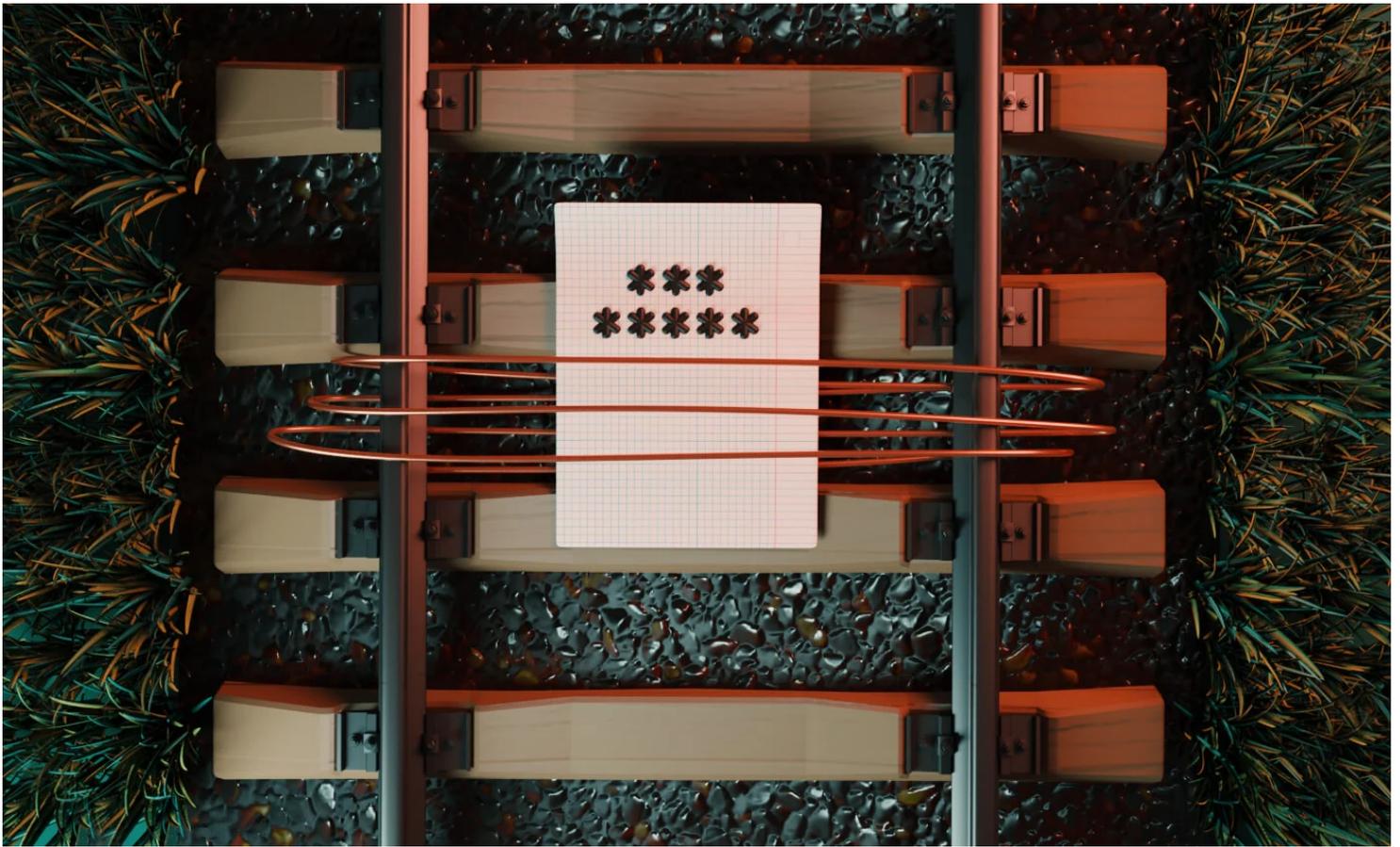


Illustration: Anastasia Krainyuk / Mediazona

Reports of sabotage are spread by several anonymous associations, for example, **Stop the Cars** , **Combat Organization of Anarcho-Communists** (BOAC), **Fighter Anarchist** , **Rospartizan** , **Exposition of Revolutionary Anarchism** , **Freedom and Freedom** , Legion **Freedom of Russia** ”, the Crimean “**Atesh**” (the latter calls itself “the military movement of Ukrainians and Crimean Tatars”).

Usually these are posts about **explosions** or **dismantling** on the tracks. However, each sabotage report is difficult to confirm in any way: it usually does not contain information about the place and time of the event, although coordinates are sometimes indicated.

The anarchists from the BOAC **did take** responsibility for blowing up the bridge leading to the "object of the Ministry of Defense." The saboteurs decided not to reveal the location, so it is impossible to confirm this message. However, the organization itself admitted: “The undermining was not 100% effective, but the experience gained will be taken into account when conducting the following attacks” - and described in detail the method of manufacturing and laying the device, using terminology like “permon has a low brisance.”

These associations, of course, do not confirm the connection with the arrested. “Stop the Cars” and completely **refused** to communicate with journalists.

“Since we often learn about the chronicles of the rail struggle from sources close to the authorities, we do not have objective statistics on detentions. Sometimes we learn about the detentions of partisans weeks later. This is a marker that the resistance is spontaneous,”Rospartizan assures.

The sharply increased number of arrests in the BOAC, for example, is associated with an increase in the total number of actions and the involvement of people who “did not fully plan” sabotage on the railways, as well as increased control over infrastructure. In "Rospartizan" they assure that they themselves do not know the number of their associates; in the BOAC they talk about "several dozen cells or participants" of those with whom they "contacted on rail sabotage."

The BOAC clarifies that the available arsenal of actions is wider on the railway lines leading to military units, when the partisans are not afraid that civilians may suffer. The Stop the Wagons association also insists that this activity does not pose a threat to civilians. For example, **reporting** that 14 wagons of a freight train went off the tracks in the Amur Region, they emphasized: "And most importantly: there are no victims, there is no threat to the environment."

Most of these associations are not limited to railway topics. The BOAC, for example, **announced** that they were involved in setting fire to military registration and enlistment offices, a practice that began almost immediately after the invasion of Ukraine and became **especially popular** with the announcement of mobilization.



Article

**The sound of burning is the sound of the end. Who sets fire to the military registration and enlistment offices in Russia and how the security forces are trying to fight it - a study by Mediazona**

## **Attempts to get close to the "combat organization"**

The Russian special services, which massively detain schoolchildren for burning cabinets, are apparently trying to get close to saboteurs who may be connected to partisan channels.

Moscow anarchists Ivan Ivko and Svetlana Orlova, 35 and 32, fled the country in July after finding themselves under surveillance. After that, the surveillance was discovered by Piotr Ivko, Ivan's brother, a programmer far from activism. On August 10, he was detained under the pretext that he allegedly swore in a public place.

After the trial and arrest under an administrative article - **the standard** practice of the security forces - Pyotr **was** tortured to call his brother and ask him to return to Moscow, because it "would be better for me, for dad, for mom, for you and for your wife." Ivan simply hung up, and his brother was soon released.

As the BBC Russian Service **wrote**, **after that, the security forces conducted five searches at the relatives of Ivko and Orlova, including the 78-year-old grandmother.** The criminal case was opened because of a post in the BOAC canal, where anarchists claimed responsibility for dismantling rails on a branch leading to the arsenal of the missile and artillery department of the Ministry of Defense near Kirzhach in the Vladimir region.

The spouses themselves, in a conversation with the BBC about BOAC, said that they “followed [the channel] with interest - but without subscribing so as not to attract attention to themselves.” They did not answer questions about involvement in sabotage, specifying only that they "support the struggle against the dictatorship."

In addition, the security forces searched the apartment of 44-year-old Sergei Serdechkin from Angarsk, trying to connect him with the BOAC. Serdechkin is not an anarchist, but was a member of the "Union of Marxists" in 2019–2020. In addition, according to the BBC, searches took place at the homes of left-wing activists from Irkutsk and Nizhny Tagil, as well as at several anarchist students from the Trans-Urals.

“We are following the news about the detained partisans, while the feeling is that it is the singles who are being caught more. That is, that the person was inspired by the example, decided to repeat, but did not fully think through and organize everything,” the anarchist Ivko told reporters. “And in order to detain a representative of some group with a name or even an organization until they heard anything, we think that the cops would not fail to mention this, for the sake of stars on shoulder straps.”

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