

2024 College of Media and Communication Excellence in International Journalism Awardees

Marina Ovsyannikova, Biographical Information



Marina Ovsyannikova is a Russian journalist and former TV editor at the international news department of Russian Television's Channel One. This is the main TV channel in Russia, completely controlled by the Kremlin. After coming to power, Putin took control of all TV channels and gradually destroyed all independent journalism in Russia. After the start of the war with Ukraine, the websites of all independent media were blocked. The Kremlin ordered all journalists to call the war not a war, but a special military operation. But Marina Ovsyannikova did not remain silent.

On March 14, 2022, during a live broadcast of the flagship evening news *Vremya* (Time) on Channel One, she burst into the studio set with a sign that read, "No War. Don't believe the propaganda. They're lying to you here." This was her protest against the Russian invasion of Ukraine, and the massive propaganda and disinformation that the Russian government consistently and systematically unleashed to deceive and mislead the world. She describes these as six seconds of truth on Russian television.

She was arrested, interrogated, fined three times, and charged under a law that criminalized "disinformation" about the Russian army. She was placed under house arrest. She faced up to 10 years in a Russian prison labor camp.

Knowing the danger Marina faced, French President Emmanuel Macron offered her political asylum. A few days before her trial, Marina Ovsyannikova cut off her electronic bracelet, and together with her daughter, managed to escape house arrest with the assistance of the France-based human rights organization, Reporters Without Borders. They used seven different vehicles to evade capture, and finally walked across the border into a forest at night. Russian authorities put her on an international wanted list. She ended up in Paris where the French authorities granted her political asylum.

In October 2023 Marina was sentenced to eight and a half years in a Russian prison penal colony, and banned from having access to the Internet for 10 years, for defaming the Russian army. She was tried for revealing the exact number of children killed by Russian troops in Ukraine. The problem is that this is public information published on the website of the United Nations. Russian courts describe any information about Russian military actions in Ukraine that is not from the Ministry of Defense as fake news.

After her protest during the live broadcast, Marina Ovsyannikova soon found herself in the middle of an information war. In Russia she was accused of having ties to the British Embassy and in Ukraine she was accused of working for the Russian secret services. She became the subject of constant harassment on the Internet. Her ex-husband, who works in the top management of the government-funded Russia Today TV channel, sued her and deprived her of her parental rights. Her son and mother called her a traitor and turned their backs on her.

Marina Ovsyannikova continues to actively oppose the Ukraine war unleashed by the Kremlin. The daughter of a Ukrainian father and a Russian mother, Marina Ovsyannikova is keenly aware of the tragedy of the Ukrainian and Russian people under authoritarian rule. As a child, her home in Grozny was destroyed during the First Chechen War.

Marina has since written a book "Russians Against The War: Six Seconds On Air," which has been translated into many European languages. The English version is titled: "Between Good and Evil: How I finally Opposed the Kremlin Propaganda." She will sign some copies for interested parties.

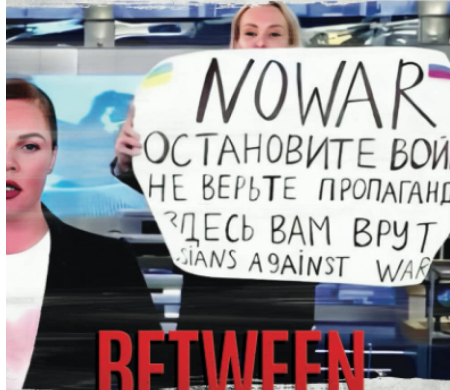


Marina being interrogated by Russian investigators (March 2022)



Marina being brought to the Basmanny Court of Moscow. August 11, 2022

MARINA OVSYANNIKOVA



BETWEEN GOOD and EVIL

HOW I FINALLY OPPOSED
THE KREMLIN PROPAGANDA