

## **Yury Staroverov**

On 22 April 2014 Staroverov, Yury Viktorovich, an activist of “The Other Russia” party and a member of the civil movement in Nizhny Novgorod, was charged by the Nizhegorodsky district court of the city of Nizhny Novgorod under Part One of Art. 318 (“Use of force, but without jeopardizing human life or health, against a representative of the authority”) of the Russian Criminal Code and given a 3-year suspended term with a period of 3 years of probation. He was charged for allegedly hitting a riot police officer during the dispersal of a civil march on 15 September 2012. On 10 February 2016 the Ostankinsky district court of the city of Moscow replaced the verdict with 3 years of imprisonment in a general-regime penal colony. Staroverov was taken into custody on the same day.

On 15 September 2012 there was a civil march in Nizhny Novgorod that was not sanctioned by the authorities. Although the event was peaceful, police officers began to disperse and detain demonstrators soon after the event began. During the dispersal, one of the police officers hit E. Zaytseva, an activist of the Nizhny Novgorod civil movement, over the head with a club. The attempt to institute criminal proceedings against Warrant Officer I.V. Lebedev, who delivered the blow, was denied, despite of a video recording that was made of the incident.

On 11 December, the place of residence of Staroverov and Zaytseva was searched. On 19 December criminal proceedings were initiated under Part One of Art. 318 (“Use of force, but without jeopardizing human life or health, against a representative of the authority”) of the Russian Criminal Code, where the aforementioned Warrant Officer Lebedev was listed amongst the individuals injured during the meeting on 15 September 2012. Staroverov was charged on 26 December 2012 and was given a measure of restraint in the form of a travel restriction. The Investigative Committee of the Russia Federation announced that the activists apparently caused physical harm to Warrant Officer Lebedev, while the illegal actions of Lebedev himself, including the blow of the club to Zaytseva’s head, were found to be legal. On 22 April 2014 the Nizhegorodsky district court of the city of Nizhny Novgorod sentenced Yury Staroverov to a 3-year suspended sentence with a period of 3 years of probation.

In 2014 Yury Staroverov moved to Moscow, where he registered with the prison administration service. It is known that he was involved with organizing financial aid for the pro-Russian separatists in Eastern Ukraine. In the second half of 2015 three administrative cases were initiated against Staroverov in connection with minor infractions of the Code of the Russian Federation on Administrative Offenses. Following this, the Corrective Services petitioned the court to change the suspended sentence to a mandatory one. On 10 February 2016 the Ostankinsky district court of the city of Moscow replaced the verdict with 3 years of imprisonment in a general-regime penal colony. Mr Staroverov was taken into custody on the same day.

Yury Staroverov has already been charged earlier under Part Two of Art. 212 (“Participation in mass riots”) of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation on 8 December 2015 by the Tver district court of Moscow for being involved in the protest in the reception area of the Office of the President. He has also been charged under Art. 319 (“Insulting a representative of authority”) on 9 June 2010 by the justice of the peace (JP) of Precinct #2 of the Sovetsky District of Nizhniy Novgorod.

The charges against Staroverov were presented after the attempt to institute criminal proceedings against the police officer, who used unreasonable physical force against a peaceful protester, was denied. This attests to a biased approach by the investigators towards the protesters. The detention of Staroverov was used as a way to put a stop to his public work and in violation of the right to a fair trial and other rights and freedoms that are guaranteed by the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and also the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.

The recognition of an individual as a political prisoner does not imply that the “Memorial” Center agrees with their views and statements, nor does it imply that it approves of their statements or actions. In particular, this applies to Staroverov’s actions in support of pro-Russian illegal armed groups on the territory of Ukraine.