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News Item

Doxxed, threatened, and arrested: Russia's war on Wikipedia editors | Nieman Journalism Lab

By Masha Borak
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> One Friday in March, not long after Russia invaded Ukraine, Mikhail, a Russia-based Wikipedia editor, opened the Telegram app to discover that he had been doxxed. His personal information, including his name and social media accounts, had been posted in a channel run by a group of Russian online vigilantes targeting Wikipedians writing about the war. Below the text was an image with a single word: "Retribution." The post had been viewed more than 110,000 times.
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> Soon after, Mikhail, who was granted anonymity for this story for his safety, started receiving threats on social media.
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> "I began to act more cautiously," he said. "I closed off the social networks from outsiders and became even more careful to monitor [Wikipedia] edits that could be linked to my name and brought up as [legal] violations."
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> That month, at least four other Wikipedia editors were also doxxed, and accused of smearing Russia's war efforts, by the group, which called itself Mrakoborec — a reference to the Aurors, or wizarding police, in Harry Potter. Among them was Mark Bernstein, an editor based in Belarus, Russia's ally in the war in Ukraine. After Bernstein's name appeared in the Mrakoborec group on March 10, he was arrested, and detained in Minsk's notorious Okrestina detention center. In June, he received a sentence of three years of restricted freedom for "organizing and preparing activities that disrupt social order."
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