

Russia: Memo to activists before 24 February

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It will soon be one year since the start of the full-scale invasion of Ukraine. Many activists have welcomed the start of the war in isolation cells and detention centres. It is likely that there will again be sweeps, raids and preventive detentions before the anniversary of the war.

The Vyvozhuk initiative (<https://t.me/vyvozhuk/>) has prepared a memo for activists in Russia who will meet 24.02 at home.

1. Don't sleep at home this week. Even if you do not live where you are registered as domiciled, it is likely that the security services know your location. Try to find a place to stay with someone you know, even if it's in another city. This will keep you safe from possible detention.
2. The police often have their eye on activists before they raid them. If you decide to move to a safer place, wear clothes you wouldn't normally wear, use a mask and headgear. Don't take the Tube or a taxi to your destination - remember the facial recognition system.
3. Take a complicated route with several bus transfers. Get off and on buses at the last minute. Add crowded places to your route (shopping mall, supermarket), get lost in the crowd. Read Vyvozhuk's memo (<https://t.me/vyvozhuk/18>) on avoiding external surveillance.
4. Your phone is your enemy. If it has ever fallen into the hands of the police, they will have copied your IMEI, allowing them to track your location. If your SIM card is registered to your passport and inserted in your phone, you will be easily found if necessary.
5. It's best to use two phones (a personal one and a safe one): hide the first one in a safe place when you're in hiding. In the second, use only your left SIM card, do not log into your personal social networks, and use only Signal or Element to communicate with those with whom you need to keep in touch. Do not log in to "State Services", otherwise you could easily be tracked down by your IP. Don't carry your phone with you even if it is switched off. This will not help. If staff know your IMEI, they will trace you even if your phone is switched off.
6. Hide your passport with friends you are not likely to visit. Remember that with a passport you will be able to leave the Russian Federation much quicker and easier in an emergency.
7. Do away with live-streaming on social media, post your whereabouts with a delay of at least a day (or better not post at all). Remember that any social network captures your login from a specific location.
8. Refuse to use bank cards and taxi/delivery apps, use cash only these days.
9. Any train, plane or bus ticket you buy with your passport is entered into the unified database of the Roost-Magistral. If you have already been apprehended and have several administrative offences for defamation, rallies, pickets, refuse to buy tickets. Use private transport and buses that sell tickets without a passport.
10. If you are a member of anti-war chats on Telegram (which is as insecure as possible), use the Gretel bot (https://t.me/gretel_sos_bot), which will help you hide chats when searched. Read more about Gretel in the article Greenhouses (<https://te-st.org/2022/04/18/gretel-bot/>).
11. Prepare not only yourself, but also your equipment: remove all materials that could be compromising (from the bin too) beforehand. Log out of your accounts, unlink your bank

accounts and, if possible, delete messengers. Clean up your browser history either with the browser tools or through CCleaner or Bleachbit. If you have flash drives, hard drives or other external media, encrypt them with VeraCrypt. Put complex passwords on all devices, don't try to remember them, use password managers (KeePassXC for offline storage, Bitwarden for cloud storage). Do not use fingerprint or Face-ID unlock. Encrypt the information from your hard drive if you leave home for a while, or better still, encrypt it and take it with you!

12. If you are going to go to protests, read the handout (<https://te-st.org/2022/09/23/security-at-protests/>) from human rights activists and the Social Technology Greenhouse.
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