

I need help and have to leave Russia. Who can I contact?

You can reach a contact person at Reporters Without Borders Germany [here](#), or via the provider Protonmail, which encrypts all email traffic, [here](#). If help is needed because journalists have been detained or have disappeared, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) offers support under the following number: +41 79 217 32 85.

Can RSF Germany help me leave the country?

We are receiving a growing number of requests for assistance from both Russian media outlets and individual journalists. Unfortunately, RSF Germany cannot issue any guarantees of admission, and therefore cannot evacuate people from Russia. The power to issue visas resides exclusively with the state authorities.

RSF Germany is lobbying the German government for Russian journalists to be given unbureaucratic possibilities to come to Germany, like journalists from Ukraine. Currently, all Russian nationals are subject to a visa requirement. Another practical hurdle is that the Russian Sputnik vaccine is not licensed in Germany, and those who have received this vaccine are considered unvaccinated from a legal point of view.

What are RSF Germany's specific demands vis-à-vis the German government?

The German Embassy in Moscow is currently fast-tracking visa procedures for human rights defenders and journalists in individual cases, in an effort to adjust its policy to the current situation. However, so far only Schengen visas are being issued, i.e. tourist visas for a stay in the Schengen Area of up to three months. With this visa, Russian journalists are not allowed to work in Germany.

We are therefore calling on the government to make it possible for Schengen visas to be converted into a protective status that includes a work permit in an uncomplicated procedure. At the same time, we are campaigning for journalists in danger to be granted humanitarian visas instead of Schengen visas (preferably according to [Section 22 \(2\) of the Residence Act](#)). With these visas, those seeking protection are permitted to work and are also entitled to receive social benefits.

Political action must be taken swiftly here, because those journalists who are most at risk will now leave Russia as quickly as possible on a Schengen visa, and some of them are already in Germany with such a visa. At present, the process of having a Schengen visa converted into a status that permits long-term residency on humanitarian grounds can be very gruelling and resource-intensive.

What is RSF Germany doing for Russian journalists?

As part of the Collateral Freedom project, RSF is [unblocking](#) access to the websites of Russian media that have been blocked by the Russian authorities. We call on all independent media outlets that are blocked by the Russian authorities to contact us so that they can also benefit from this initiative. We have also been running two servers on the Tor network [since 2013](#), and are currently expanding this project considerably due to the massive pressure on independent media workers in Russia and Ukraine. In addition, we have launched the solidarity campaign [The Truth Wins](#), which also supports media and journalists in Russia and other countries that are exposed to digital repression.

How can RSF support me in Germany?

We are seeing an unprecedented wave of solidarity from large and small media outlets and publishing companies in Germany, as well as from German foundations, employers' associations, the federal and state governments and German society as a whole. At the moment we are trying to gather the many good ideas and approaches and coordinate them in an effective way. To this end, we are in talks with the German government and other organisations.