

Activist Dead After UK Asylum Rejection

August 21, 2025

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An anti-Putin activist has been found dead in London after his asylum application was rejected, raising questions about the challenges facing dissidents seeking protection in the UK.

Alexander Frolov, 26, was discovered in Acton, west London, on 28 July. Friends believe he took his own life after struggling with the pressure of a possible return to Russia, where he feared imprisonment for his opposition to Vladimir Putin's regime.

Frolov arrived in Britain in 2021 on a temporary agricultural visa before applying for asylum in December 2022. Following Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February that year, he refused to return home, saying he could not "take part in killing people."

His asylum claim was rejected in April 2024. He appealed and had been awaiting a rescheduled hearing when he died.

The Metropolitan Police confirmed they were not treating his death as suspicious. An inquest is due next week.

The Russian Democratic Society, a group representing exiled activists, described Frolov as a “dedicated opponent of Putin’s regime” and a “constant presence at anti-war protests.” They noted his volunteer work and commitment to supporting fellow exiles.

His friend, Galina Shakirova, who met him while working at an anti-war rally, remembered him as “kind, generous, quietly dependable.” She expressed concern about the risks faced by Russian dissidents: “Imagine being an opposition activist who knows that returning home almost certainly means prison. You’ve spoken out publicly. You’ve worked with organisations labelled in Russia as ‘undesirable’ or ‘extremist’. Then you ask for protection, hoping for safety. And instead, you’re refused.”

Campaign groups have said the case highlights wider concerns about how asylum applications from political dissidents are being handled. They argue that delays and high rejection rates could leave others in similarly vulnerable positions.

The Home Office declined to comment on Frolov’s case, citing its policy of confidentiality, but said all asylum applications are considered individually on their merits and in line with the UK’s international obligations.

Britain has long been seen as a safe haven for exiles, but advocates say the system faces pressure from backlogs and rising demand. The outcome of Frolov’s case, they argue, underscores the difficult balance between immigration control and protection for those fleeing political persecution.