



Standing Alone, Together

Arshak Makichyan, Fridays For Future Russia
Russia

☀ Call to Action

Support Arshak by using the hashtag #LetRussiaStrikeForClimate on social media platforms.

Join with Arshak and those organizing climate action strikes on the Fridays for Future website:
www.fridaysforfuture.org

☀ Values

- Determination
- Collaboration
- Leadership
- Optimism
- Inspiration

☀ Lessons Learned

One single voice can shatter the silence imposed by a government. Be courageous, and speak truth to power.

Bravery inspires. Be an inspiration to your peers.

Civil disobedience is our right; educate yourself about this right, and don't be afraid to use it.

In pursuit of a broader collaborative effort to raise awareness about the global impacts of climate change, Arshak Makichyan, 24, has had to learn how to go it alone.

In Russia, where he grew up, protests of more than one person are considered an illegal gathering, unless approved by the state. Undeterred, Arshak, a music student in Moscow, began to protest every week in Pushkin Square. His solo protest soon turned into a much larger movement, and his activism has inspired other young people in cities and towns across Russia to join him.

Other climate activists, like Greta Thunberg, have taken note of his message and supported Arshak in his quest to get the world's fourth-biggest carbon emitter to do more to protect the climate.

☀ Language Arts

Create a video in which you explain the difference between legitimate protest (for example, exercising your right to free speech and freedom of assembly), and criminal activities (things like looting, aggression against other people, etc.). Focus not only on the differences between the two, but the dangers of conflating the two (both for individuals and for society as a whole).

Do you think governments should legislate against the right to protest? Write an argumentative essay in which you explain your position on this matter. Back it up with data from external research sources.

What is the current situation of protest and free speech in the United States? Write a series of 10-12 tweets designed to bring attention to the challenges facing Americans who want to express unpopular opinions; the legal protections they have (or the ones they need); and how people can help support them.

Having a free press and access to news through social media and the internet are privileges that are not present in all countries of the world. Unfortunately, sometimes dishonest organizations take advantage of those privileges to plant false information for political and/or financial gain. Read the following [guidelines to help spot fake news](#)¹. Then read this [article](#)² about fake news being used to manipulate Latino voters in the 2020 U.S. election. After reading both articles, write a short reflection paper on the effect that misinformation masked as news can have in a society, and propose 5 suggestions for how to fight it.

How do you think the international community can help climate activists who are being oppressed in other countries? Conduct research on this issue, and then create an informational presentation in which you explain to your peers how they can get involved. End with a concrete call to action in which you suggest a safe and effective way to get involved with this cause.

STEM Activities

Read this [article about environmental activism in Russia](#)³, and the barriers that environmental activists there are facing. Create a chart that depicts issues that are unique to people in Russia and ways such issues could be addressed if they were to become a challenge in the U.S.

Arshak is not just a climate activist, he is also a music student. Music, and sound in general, is produced when something vibrates and causes the air molecules to also vibrate, initiating a chain of soundwave vibrations that move through the air and into your ear. Besides making music, sound is also used for measuring distances. Learn about the properties, sources, and applications of three types of sound waves; how engineers use ultrasound waves in medical sonography devices and ocean sonar equipment; and how ultrasonic sensors are engineered. [Activity link](#)⁴.

[STEM Career](#)⁵ is one virtual resource that Arshak and others can utilize to engage students in Russia about the vital importance of sustainability.

Sustainability Innovations

Russia is limited in its sustainable efforts. However, the [Russian Social Ecological Union](#)⁶ was one of the first sustainability-focused NGOs in Russia. Founded in 1992, RSEU is targeting major ecological issues, with a focus on climate change, energy efficiency, and nuclear threats.

Russia is a very dangerous place to protest, but Arshak made the decision that ignoring climate change was even more dangerous. [Global Climate Strike](#)⁷ is a website hosted by 350.org that allows individuals to get involved and collaborate to address global climate issues. Find out how your support and collaboration could help Arshak and other protesters in Russia.

Sustainability Career Pathways

Musician. Music, like other forms of art, offers a powerful way to draw attention to environmental causes. Listen to the temperatures rising in this powerful “[A Song of Our Warming Planet](#)”⁸ for cello. Or read this [article](#)⁹ about many musicians—from Paul McCartney and Sheryl Crowe to Grimes and Lil Dickey—who are using their celebrity to draw attention to climate change. If you have a musical gift, you too can use it to draw attention to our sustainability crisis, and to call for solutions.

Human Rights Lawyer. Lawyers can help activists avoid, or at least navigate their way through difficult court systems. They can

also help fight human rights abuses wherever they occur in the world. While this is not an easy path, this [article offers an introduction on how to become a human rights lawyer and what you can do with such training¹⁰](#). Note: Knowing more than one language is a plus for this path.

Foreign Correspondent. With the climate changing, and with youth demanding action and political change all over the world, it seems like the news cycle is accelerating. Only with journalists accurately covering the stories can people learn about these important events. Journalists play a key role in drawing attention to political activism, disasters, and many other things that people need to know about. Do you want to report the news in other parts of the world? Perhaps international journalism is the career path for you. [Learn more about being a foreign correspondent here¹¹](#).

Geographer. Russia is going to suffer significant effects due to a warming climate, from melting permafrost to forest fires. Geographers can help explore what these effects will be, and figure out how to mitigate their impacts on the Russian people and wildlife. Want to learn about how to become a geographer? [Here is an introduction¹²](#). And [here are resources for exploring the field¹³](#).

Climate Activist. Now and in the years to come, there will be a growing need for individuals who are dedicated to building political commitment to stabilizing Earth's climate. This is an activity you can be involved in now. [Organize a Friday climate strike¹⁴](#) at your town hall, or pressure your school to divest from fossil fuel stocks and/or invest in renewable energy. As Arshak has demonstrated, it only takes one person to start a movement. The best way to enter this field and make a difference is to get active now! And for ideas about future career opportunities, visit [Idealist.org¹⁵](#) to explore thousands of activist jobs, internships, and volunteer opportunities.

1 <https://www.factcheck.org/2016/11/how-to-spot-fake-news/>

2 <https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/latino-voters-misinformation-targets-election-2020/story?id=74189342>

3 <https://www.csis.org/analysis/environmental-activism-russia-strategies-and-prospects>

4 https://www.teachengineering.org/activities/view/nyu_soundwaves_activity1

5 <http://stemcareer.com/>

6 <https://rusecounion.ru/index.php?q=eng>

7 <https://fridaysforfuture.org/>

8 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5t08CLczdK4>

9 <https://www.newscientist.com/article/2206461-the-musicians-helping-make-climate-change-a-cultural-movement/>

10 <https://www.humanrightscareers.com/magazine/how-to-become-a-human-rights-lawyer/>

11 <https://www.masterclass.com/articles/how-to-become-a-foreign-correspondent#how-to-become-a-foreign-correspondent>

12 <https://collegegrad.com/careers/geographers>

13 <https://www.gale.com/geography>

14 <https://fridaysforfuture.org/>

15 <https://www.idealists.org/en/>

