

Prosecutor General Checks NGOs for Source of Foreign Funding

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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The Prosecutor General's Office, together with the Justice Ministry and the Federal Anti-Monopoly Service, has begun conducting large-scale unscheduled checks into non-governmental organizations to determine sources of foreign funding, a news report said Monday.

Marina Grudneva, a spokeswoman for the Prosecutor General's Office, said the inspection was being conducted "everywhere and in accordance with the prosecutor general's work agenda," Kommersant reported. She did not specify which NGOs were under scrutiny.

On Monday, inspections took place at the Moscow School of Political Studies, founded in 1992 with support from the Council of Europe.

The prosecutor's office requested documents showing the sources of the school's funding, including organizations and individuals that it received funding from, as well as the

citizenship of the donors and the purpose of the funding.

According to the school's representatives, employees of the prosecutor's office said they had a whole list of organizations that they plan to inspect in the near future.

Pavel Chikov, head of the Agora human rights association, said the inspection was markedly different from previous ones and not part of the office's routine agenda.

"The [Prosecutor General's] Office is enlisting the help of experts from the Justice Ministry and tax authorities. This has never happened before," Chikov said.

Natalya Taubina, head of the Public Verdict foundation, which helps victims of police violence, said the Justice Ministry had already scheduled all its inspections for 2013 and therefore had no grounds to carry out unscheduled checks.

"So now they have only one choice: to act with help from the Prosecutor General's Office to obtain the necessary information now," she said in comments carried by Kommersant.

Taubina also said she believes that the inspection marked the start of work on compiling the "foreign agents" list.

According to the "foreign agents" law passed in November 2012, all NGOs that receive foreign funding and participate in political activities must register as "foreign agents" or face sanctions and possible criminal prosecution.

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