

NGO That Was Refused 'Foreign Agent' Label Seeks Answers

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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The Chuvashia-based human rights organization Shchit i Mech, or Shield and Sword, has submitted a request to the regional prosecutor to check the lawfulness of the Justice Ministry's refusal to register the organization as a "foreign agent."

Shchit i Mech was the first nongovernmental organization to voluntarily submit an application to register as a foreign agent under the NGOs law last December.

The organization's chairman, Alexei Glukhov, told Kommersant in December that the move was aimed at "studying the new law from the inside."

But after the Justice Ministry turned down the organization's request, the group submitted a request to the first deputy prosecutor, Alexander Buksman, to look into the lawfulness of the Justice Ministry's decision, Interfax reported Friday.

According to Ramil Akhmetgaliyev, a lawyer for Agora who assisted Shchit i Mech, the group wants a legal assessment of the Justice Ministry's decision as well as an explanation for why the organization was included in the wide-ranging inspections of NGOs conducted by prosecutors in recent weeks.

Since February, over 90 organizations have received unannounced inspections by prosecutors in connection with the new law on NGOs, which requires any organization receiving foreign funding to register as a foreign agent.

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