

\$1Bln Figure for NGO Financing Not in Doubt, Prosecutor's Office Says

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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The General Prosecutor's Office confirmed on Wednesday that nongovernmental organizations in Russia received just under \$1 billion in foreign funding from December to March, a figure cited by President Vladimir Putin that NGOs have argued is inflated.

"There are no doubts concerning the validity of the conclusions of the authorized [governmental] bodies regarding the amount of foreign funding of NGOs," prosecutor's office spokeswoman Marina Gridnyeva said Wednesday, according to RIA-Novosti.

"There is documentary proof of these numbers," Gridnyeva said.

Putin provided this figure during an interview last week with German broadcaster ARD, and many NGO officials expressed surprise, questioning its accuracy.

In all of 2011, NGOs operating in Russia received upward of 19 billion rubles (\$615 million)

from foreign sources, or about two-thirds of the amount from the last four months alone, Gridnyeva said.

Officials from regional prosecutors' offices, the Federal Tax Service and other state agencies have conducted searches of hundreds of NGOs across Russia in recent weeks with the stated goal of checking for signs of extremism and enforcing a law passed last year obliging groups that receive foreign funds and conduct "political activity" to register as "foreign agents."

Human rights activists have slammed the raids as a pressure tactic, and Western countries including the United States and Germany have expressed concerns about them to Russian authorities.

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