

Foreign Ministry Slams Critical U.S. Report on Religious Freedom

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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The Foreign Ministry has dismissed as "politicized" a critical U.S. State Department report about religious freedom in Russia and cautioned that such reports incite religious conflicts.

The annual report, released on Monday, mentions Russia among several countries around the world, including Saudi Arabia, North Korea, Cuba, Iran and China, that it says imposed restrictions on freedom of religion last year.

Konstantin Dolgov, the Foreign Ministry's special representative for human rights, democracy and the rule of law, said in a statement that the State Department's report "offers a distorted and politicized picture of the state of religious freedoms in 2012 by replacing the thorough analysis of reasons for religious intolerance with ill-founded accusations directed at numerous states, including Russia."

"Such biased reports aggravate inter-religious problems," Dolgov said Thursday.

According to the International Religious Freedom Report for 2012, the Russian government "targeted members of minority religious groups through the use of extremism charges to ban religious materials and restrict groups' right to assemble."

It said authorities also "restricted religious minorities through detention, raids, denial of official registration with the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) and denial of visas to religious workers."

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