

Putin Says 'Foreign Agent' Law Can Be 'Improved'

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President Vladimir Putin says he would welcome "improving" a controversial law on non-governmental organizations that activists say is aimed at stamping out dissent.

Putin told the G20 Civil Summit on Friday that he wanted to examine the law's application and alter it so that "it doesn't get in anyone's way," Russian news agencies reported.

Last year, parliament rubber-stamped a Putin-backed bill that requires all NGOs receiving foreign funding and found to engage in vaguely defined "political activity" to register as "foreign agents," a term conjuring visions of Soviet-era intrigues.

Many senior officials were visibly uncomfortable with the law and did nothing to enforce it until this spring, when hundreds of NGOs were raided after Putin mentioned it in a speech.

(AP)

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