The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Constitutional Court Receives First NGO Law Challenge

By The Moscow Times

August 13, 2013

Russia's Constitutional Court has received the first official complaint from a non-governmental organization against the controversial law requiring political NGOs receiving funding from abroad to register as "foreign agents."

Kostroma's Center for supporting community initiatives was fined 300,000 rubles ($9,000) for organizing a roundtable with U.S. diplomats.

Alexander Zamaryanov, the center's executive director, was fined another 100,000 rubles, Kommersant reported.

The center stated that the recent law violates at least five articles of the Constitution.

Lawyer Ramil Akhmetgaliev said the law forced people and organizations to give up their beliefs,adding that it "violates the equality of citizens' rights regardless of their belonging

to this or that organization and the right to participate in managing state affairs."

The decision to file the complaint was made by the board of the Kostroma Center after the Sverdlovsk regional court upheld the fines.

According to investigators, the center's April event about relations between the U.S. and Russia counted as "political activity."

The center has since chosen to close and work as a an unregistered public movement.

Human rights activists hope that the court's decision will also explain the term "political activity" because they say almost any NGO may be subject to prosecution given a loose interpretation.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2013/08/13/constitutional-court-receives-first-ngo-law-challenge-a26704