

Supreme Court Delays Hearing on Closure of Russian NGO Memorial

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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The Supreme Court has postponed a hearing on the closure of rights group Memorial.

Russia's Supreme Court has postponed until Dec. 17 a hearing on the closure of rights group Memorial, Interfax reported, a small victory for a group that has made its name criticizing rights abuses since the fall of the Soviet Union.

The motion to liquidate the group, whose activists have documented the deaths of Russian soldiers fighting on the side of pro-Russian separatists in east Ukraine, despite Moscow's denials that it has sent troops or arms to help the rebels, was based largely on a technicality. Memorial said the delay would allow it to address the issues raised by the Justice Ministry.

"Though we don't agree with the complaints against us, we'll use the additional time to fix the problems the Justice Ministry has raised. If we have to busy ourselves with nonsense to survive, we'll busy ourselves with nonsense," said Oleg Orlov, one of the group's founding members.

The Justice Ministry says that the titles of regional Memorial offices are improperly worded, and that the group had not provided an adequate statement explaining its activities.

Memorial was founded by Soviet-era dissidents to document the historical crimes committed in the communist dictatorship's prison camps. It came into its own during two wars in Chechnya in the 1990s and early 2000s, when it sent teams of researchers into the conflict zone, documenting the disappearances of civilians whose cases would otherwise have gone unrecorded.

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