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Ombudswoman Says Putin Supports Letting NGOs Lose 'Foreign Agent' Tag

By The Moscow Times

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Human rights ombudswoman Ella Pamfilova.

President Vladimir Putin has supported a proposal to allow non-governmental organizations to lose their "foreign agent" label once they stop receiving funding from abroad, a news report said.

The proposal was put to the president by human rights ombudswoman Ella Pamfilova, who said it was "paradoxical and unacceptable" that NGOs could be labeled with the tag, but had no option for removing it, Ekho Moskvy reported late Monday night.

Pamfilova told Ekho Moskvy that she could not say how long it would take to work out a procedure for removing the tag.

A 2012 law requires any NGO that receives funding from abroad and engages in vaguely defined political activities to register as a "foreign agent." The term had been widely used

in the Soviet Union where it meant a spy.

The St. Petersburg branch of the Soldiers' Mothers group, a well-known organization that defends soldiers' rights, lost its appeal this month to have its "foreign agent" label removed.

The Justice Ministry told the organization that no procedure for removing the label existed, and later told the Interfax news agency that it had no plans to create one.

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