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Perm-36 NGO Loses Appeal Against Foreign Agent Label

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The fence and guard tower at the Soviet forced labor camp Perm-36 100 kilometers northeast of the city of Perm in Russia.

A non-profit organization dedicated to commemorating victims of the Soviet Gulag camp system has lost an appeal in a Perm court to remove it from a government list of "foreign agents," the TASS news agency reported Monday, citing a local court spokesperson.

The Perm-36 non-profit group operated a museum at a former Gulag prison camp near the city until pressure from local authorities forced it to quit the site in March.
The government later ruled that Perm-36 had engaged in "political activity" and had received foreign funding, and must register itself as a foreign agent.

The group appealed the ruling, which came after a Justice Ministry investigation into its activities prompted by an anonymous petition from local citizens, who were allegedly concerned with the organization's conduct.

On Monday, Perm's Lenin District Court ruled in the Justice Ministry's favor.

Aside from the stigma of the label, "foreign agents" are subject to heightened checks from authorities looking for signs of extremism in their activities and face large fines for infringements.

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