

Soldiers' Mothers NGO Removed From 'Foreign Agents' List

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The St. Petersburg branch of the Soldiers' Mothers group.

Russia's Justice Ministry has removed Soldiers' Mothers of St. Petersburg from the “foreign agents” list of NGOs, the organization's spokesman told The Moscow Times on Thursday.

“I was checking another NGO's status in the list Wednesday night and saw by chance that we had been excluded,” said Alexander Peredruk. “Now we are waiting for an official letter from the ministry.”

Soldiers' Mothers of St. Petersburg, whose stated mission is to expose human rights violations in Russia's military, was removed from the list on Oct. 23 on the grounds that it “has stopped fulfilling the role of a foreign agent,” according to official ministry registry information.

A 2012 law requires NGOs to label themselves “foreign agents” if they receive funding from abroad and engage in vaguely defined political activities. The term has been slammed by critics as suggestive of espionage and NGOs across the country have fought to rid themselves

of the label.

Soldiers' Mothers of St. Petersburg was labeled a “foreign agent” in August 2014, though the NGO had stopped receiving foreign grants months before that, Peredruk told The Moscow Times.

The NGO had made several appeals to have the "foreign agent" label removed, beginning in September last year.

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