The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

UN Resolution to Address Human Rights NGO Situation in Russia

November 24, 2015



The resolution specifically mentions restrictions on NGOs' ability to cooperate with the UN and other international organizations.

The United Nations General Assembly is set to debate on Wednesday a resolution recognizing the role of human rights advocates and to defend them, with particular attention paid to Russian rights groups, the Vedomosti newspaper reported Tuesday.

The resolution, co-sponsored by 15 countries and partially drafted by Norway's Helsinki Committee, focuses on restrictions on the activity of human rights groups, and calls for an end to the detention of their members.

“Many clauses will be relevant to Russia, due to the overall climate in which rights groups are now operating,” the Helsinki Committee's Gunnar Elekove-Slydal was quoted as saying by Vedomosti.

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In Russia, the Justice Ministry declared the Committee Against Torture NGO a “foreign agent” in January 2015, following the organization's presentation of its report on torture in Russia at a UN committee session, Vedomosti reported.

The human rights activist and member of Russia's presidential human rights council Andrei Yurov was quoted as saying that similar documents “were more important in northern European countries, where they were applied,” and that they “did not spur others to practical action.”

“However, it is necessary to raise the issue of protecting human rights groups: if the UN advocates these principles, other organizations should put them into practice,” he added.

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