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Five Foreign Organizations Declared 'Undesirable' in Russia This Year

By The Moscow Times

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Yury Chaika

Five foreign non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have been labelled "undesirable" by the Kremlin in the past year, the Vedomosti newspaper reported Wednesday.

Russia's Prosecutor General Yury Chaika told the State Duma that investigations into the NGOs are continuing with the help of the Foreign Ministry. The investigations seek to establish if the NGOs pose a threat to national security and the constitutional system, the TASS news agency reported.

Four of the organizations recognized as undesirable were American, while a fifth charity was from Lichtenstein. The group included the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), who describe their work as "strengthening democratic institutions around the world."

The NED released a statement on their website after the organization was declared

undesirable in July 2015. They criticized the 2015 law as “limiting the freedom of Russian citizens,” claiming that the it “contravened Russia’s own constitution as well as numerous international laws and treaties.” The Kremlin maintains that the law aims to curb foreign influence rather than democracy.

Chaika said that the organizations were working to discredit Russian authorities and that they financed the planning of protests in the country, TASS reported.

A Russian law passed in 2015 allows prosecutors to limit or halt the work of foreign organizations deemed to be “undesirable.” Punishment for breaking these limits can result in fines or prison terms lasting up to six years.

A previous law passed in 2012 required NGOs receiving foreign funding while engaging in political activities to register as “foreign agents.”

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