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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Two American NGOs Declared 'Undesirable' in Russia

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Russia has added two American NGOs to the country's list of "undesirable" organizations, Russia's General Prosecutor's Office announced in a statement on its website Thursday.

The 2015 law on "undesirables" was designed to limit foreign influence in Russia and organizations on the list are often forced to shut down, forbidden from holding public events and from distributing promotional materials. Non-compliance with the law can result in fines or a prison term of up to six years.

The International Republican Institute (IRI) and the Media Development Investment Fund (MDIF) were Thursday deemed to "present a threat to the basic constitutional order of the Russian Federation and its state security," the General Prosecutor's Office statement said.

Founded in 1983, the IRI aims to "support democracy around the world," and has been active in Russia since the early 1990s.

The MDIF offers consulting services and financial support to independent media worldwide and has worked in Russia since 1998. Earlier this year Russian state television channel NTV accused the Fund of being an agent of the U.S. State Department and its Russian clients of being propagandists of U.S. foreign policy.

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