

Russian Justice Ministry Searches Human Rights Group Memorial

By [The Moscow Times](#)

September 07, 2016



Denis Abramov / Vedomosti

The offices of human rights group Memorial have been raided by Russian authorities, the organization announced on social media Wednesday.

The organization faces allegations of working as an undeclared "foreign agent," a Soviet-era label given to non-governmental organizations which receive funding from abroad. All "foreign agents" must identify themselves as such in all their publications under Russian law.

"An unplanned search of the Memorial human rights organization took place on Sept. 5," a statement on the group's Facebook page read. "The Ministry of Justice is undertaking the search under orders from the General Prosecutor's office to 'detect signs that the organization is acting as a foreign agent.'"

The group has so far submitted 31, 250 pages of documents, including bank statements and a list of publications, to prove its innocence, the statement said. The results of the search will be announced before Sept. 30.

Memorial's director Arseniy Roginskiy said that if his organization was labeled as a foreign agent, the group would go to court to fight the ruling.

Russia's Justice Ministry added the country's only independent pollster, the Moscow-based Levada Centre, to its [list of "foreign agents" earlier this week](#).

The move has been linked by some critics to the upcoming parliamentary elections for Russia's State Duma, which are set take place on Sept. 18.

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