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Russia Bans Protest Movement Ahead of Rallies Planned for Saturday

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Maria Baronova / Instagram

This Wednesday, three days before the political movement "Open Russia" hopes to mobilize nationwide protests against the Kremlin, Russia's Prosecutor General blacklisted the group as an "undesirable organization," banning all its activities.

This Saturday, Open Russia is planning anti-Putin demonstrations across Russia.

Russian officials formally blacklisted three separate organizations: the Britain-registered "Open Russia" organization, the social movement "Open Russia," and the U.S.-based Institute of Modern Russia. Open Russia was founded by exiled former oligarch Mikhail Khodorkovsky, whose son heads IMR in New York.

"Their activities are aimed at inciting protests and destabilizing [Russia's] domestic political situation, presenting a threat to the constitutional foundations of the Russian Federation and the security of the state," the Prosecutor General explained in a public statement.

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The decision makes it a criminal offense in Russia to work for Open Russia or IMR.

Russia's law against "undesirable organizations" took effect in May 2015. Any group added to the list is immediately banned in Russia, and anyone who continues to work for these organizations faces serious fines and possible incarceration.

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