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CNN, Radio Liberty Likely Targets of Kremlin Retaliation

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Margarita Simonyan / Screenshot RT

U.S. media outlets, including CNN, Voice of America and Radio Liberty, may be hit with restrictions in Russia as early as next week as part of an escalating media tit-for-tat between Moscow and Washington.

The Kremlin's RT news network this week agreed to register as a foreign agent in the United States, following allegations it interfered in the 2016 presidential election. President Vladimir Putin warned the Kremlin would impose restrictions on U.S. media working in Russia in response.

CNN, Voice of America, Radio Liberty and its "Current Time" television channel are likely bear the brunt of the sanctions, Senator Alexei Pushkov, who chairs the Federation Council's Information Policy Committee, told the state-run RIA Novosti news agency Friday.

The State Duma on Friday announced that lawmakers and experts were drafting amendments

to Russia's controversial foreign agent law to include media organizations.

Related article: RT Refuses U.S. Request to Register as Foreign Agent

The 2012 foreign agent law requires non-governmental organizations that receive foreign funding to register as "foreign agents."

The Duma said the new drafts would be ready by Monday and may go through the first of three readings on Wednesday.

On Thursday, RT said that it faces a new deadline — Monday, Nov. 13 — to comply with the 1930s law which would require it to brand itself as a foreign lobbyist.

Editor-in-chief Margarita Simonyan said that the head of RT America could be arrested and the channel's assets seized if it failed to register.

"Between these consequences and registration as a foreign agent, we are forced to choose registration," Simonyan said on RT. "Although, of course, we categorically disagree with this requirement."

Moscow's retaliatory measures could come as early as next week, Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova warned on state-run television on Thursday.

"Let's unpack the surprise in parts," Zakharova said when asked by a state television host whether U.S. newspapers would have to pack their bags.

President Vladimir Putin vowed a tit-for-tat response if RT America or Sputnik, another Kremlin-controlled site, faced pressure in the U.S.

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