

Russian State Duma Bans 'Foreign Agent' Journalists

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Sergey Savostyanov / TASS

The State Duma on Wednesday banned journalists representing U.S. media outlets registered as "foreign agents," saying it was "defending democratic values."

The measure was framed by lawmakers as a mirror response to the U.S. Congress' decision to [strip](#) the Kremlin-backed RT news outlet of its press credentials last month. Meanwhile, Russia's Justice Ministry [registered](#) nine U.S. news outlets as "foreign agents" on Tuesday following a new media law.

"While defending democratic values, the deputies of the State Duma reserve the right to take symmetrical measures in connection with the decision to deprive a number of Russian journalists of accreditation in the U.S. Congress," the Duma said in a statement [carried](#) by the state-run TASS news agency.

Related article: [Russia's RT Stripped of U.S. Congress Press Credentials](#)

"Any infringement of the fundamental rights and freedoms of man is unacceptable," the Duma said in its statement, "including the freedom of speech and the right to receive and transmit information."

According to TASS, lawmakers said that the measures could be lifted if the U.S. Congress lifts its restrictions on Russian media.

"We did not have the restriction of foreign journalists' freedom of speech on our agenda," Duma deputy Olga Savastyanova is cited by TASS as saying. "Our decision is a reciprocal, mirror response to the actions of American politicians."

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