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Russia Blocks Khodorkovsky's Open Russia Website

December 12, 2017



Alexander Solovyov, chairman of the "Open Russia" (Vova Zhabrikov / URA.RU / TASS)

Russia's media watchdog Roskomnadzor has added the website of the Open Russia political movement, founded by exiled oligarch Mikhail Khodorkovsky, to its registry of blocked sites.

The pro-democracy NGO was blacklisted by Russia's Prosecutor General in April as an "undesirable organization." After a law passed in 2015, groups handed the label are immediately banned and its employees face prison terms.

Related article: Five Foreign Organizations Declared 'Undesirable' in Russia This Year

"Their activities are aimed at inciting protests and destabilizing domestic political situation, presenting a threat to Russia's constitutional foundations and the security of the state," the Prosecutor General said after Open Russia's blacklisting in April.

Open Russia responded to the news Tuesday saying the group could "not be silenced."

Embed:

> Open Russia will not be silenced. We will continue to work and continue to tell the truth even when to do so is considered 'undesirable' by certain people. We ask our followers to support us in this and help keep us up and running. https://t.co/Pw8QuykrPc
>
> — Khodorkovsky Center (@mbk_center) December 12, 2017

A total of 11 organizations were added to the "undesirable" registry since the law took effect, though none of their websites were blocked in Russia due to legal complications, the Interfax news agency reported.

Last month, the State Duma passed an amendment to ease the procedure for blocking websites of undesirable organizations and waved the requirement for a court order, Interfax reported.

A statement on the Open Russia website — which on Tuesday morning was still accessible to The Moscow Times — said "most" Russian providers had already blocked the site.

"The Open Russia website was blocked after a request by the General Prosecutor. But we are continuing to work!" the statement said.

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