

Memorial Human Rights Group Forced to Leave St. Petersburg HQ

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The Memorial advocacy group must leave its longtime St. Petersburg headquarters after housing authorities decided not to renew its lease, the latest legal action by Russian authorities against the embattled human rights activists.

Memorial documents Soviet human rights abuses and assists victims in the North Caucasus and other areas. Two high-ranking Memorial staff members are [facing](#) charges that supporters argue are politically motivated, while the organization's offices in the North Caucasus have been [torched](#) by arsonists.

Housing authorities in St. Petersburg are not renewing Memorial's lease in the office it has occupied since 1997, local opposition politician Boris Vishnevsky [told](#) the Fontanka.ru news website.

The group reportedly asked the administration's property management committee to extend

its lease, which expired in January, but the request was rejected.

Related article: [Rights Group Memorial Declared 'Foreign Agent' \(For Criticizing Law About 'Foreign Agents'\)](#)

“Simply put, they were told: ‘kindly leave the property and head to the street’,” Vishnevsky was quoted as saying.

He also said that Memorial paid rent on time, did not damage property and never violated the terms of its rental agreement.

“One can only guess” why they were evicted, Vishnevsky said.

Memorial has three months to vacate its offices of 21 years, housing committee officials [told](#) the RBC news website.

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