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Moscow Approves Event Honoring Stalinist Victims After Backlash, NGO Says

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The Memorial human rights group says it has reached an agreement with Moscow city officials to hold an annual commemoration of the victims of Stalinist terror, days after the authorities withdrew permission for the event.

Participants of the "Returning the Names" ceremony traditionally gather at the Solovetsky Stone memorial — installed in 1990 outside the former KGB headquarters in Moscow — on Oct. 29 to read the names, ages and professions of those who died in Stalin's purges. Moscow authorities refused permission on Friday for the annual ceremony, citing construction work at the site, and suggested moving it to another monument to political victims unveiled by President Vladimir Putin last year.

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Memorial, which has staged the ceremony for the past 11 years, called the city's proposal to change the location "outrageous" over the weekend, later saying that City Hall officials had agreed to a meeting on Monday to determine a location for the event.

On Monday evening, Memorial said that after a "constructive meeting," Moscow authorities had agreed to allow the annual ceremony to be held at the usual location.

"We will see each other at the same place, at the same time," Memorial posted on it's Facebook page following the meeting.

Memorial, which has been labeled a "foreign agent" in Russia for receiving money from abroad, has been increasingly targeted by the Russian government and pro-Kremlin vigilantes over its work. In January 2018, Amnesty International called on the Russian authorities to put an end to the coordinated assault on the NGO.

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