

Prominent Human Rights NGO Labeled ‘Foreign Agent’ in Russia

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Lev Ponomarev **Anton Novoderzhkin / TASS**

A prominent Russian civil rights group has been blacklisted as a “foreign agent” months after its leader spent time behind bars over a protest, the Justice Ministry has said.

Russia’s Justice Ministry [initiated](#) an inspection of Lev Ponomarev’s “For Human Rights” group for engaging in suspected political activity while receiving money from abroad in December. Ponomarev, 77, [spent](#) 16 days in jail that month for allegedly calling for an unauthorized protest against the detention of a group of teenagers accused of extremism.

Related article: [77-Year-Old Russian Activist Detained Over Protest Calling for Teenagers’ Release](#)

The Justice Ministry [added](#) “For Human Rights” to its registry of foreign agents on Wednesday. A total of 69 NGOs are currently listed as foreign agents in Russia.

“What are we going to do? We’ll be foreign agents. I hope they don’t shoot us,” Ponomaryov [told](#) the Kommersant business daily after the ruling.

“For Human Rights” was previously [labeled](#) a foreign agent in December 2014, a designation that was pulled in 2015.

Update: The Justice Ministry later listed two more of Ponomaryov’s NGOs as “foreign agents,” including the In the Defense of the Rights of Prisoners Foundation and Goryachaya Liniya (Hotline).

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