

Russian Lawmakers Accuse BBC, Meduza, RFE/RL of Violating Election Law

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Mikhail Pochuyev / TASS

A State Duma commission on foreign interference says it has found violations of election law by six foreign and independent outlets operating in Russia, Interfax [reported](#) Friday.

Russian lawmakers created the commission after this summer's wave of opposition protests in Moscow. At the time, Russia had accused Germany's Deutsche Welle news outlet, the U.S. Embassy in Moscow and Google of meddling in Russia's internal affairs by allegedly promoting the protests and encouraging people to attend them.

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According to commission head Vasily Piskarev, the Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Current Time, Meduza, BBC Russia, MBKh-Media and Voice of America news outlets violated a so-

called day of silence the day before Russia held local and regional elections on Sept. 8 with their news coverage.

“Representatives of the department which oversees the implementation of media law confirmed that those outlets violated the law during the election campaign and on election day,” Interfax quoted Piskarev as saying at the commission’s meeting Thursday.

Lawmakers plan to send their findings to the Prosecutor’s Office and to state telecoms watchdog Roskomnadzor, Interfax reported.

Artem Kozlyuk, the head of the Roskomsvoboda internet rights group, told The Moscow Times that Roskomnadzor and the Prosecutor’s Office could use the commission’s findings to block these outlets in Russia.

“They [Roskomnadzor] might do the same thing they did with Telegram,” Kozlyuk said. “They will go to court. The court will take Roskomnadzor’s side and order the outlets to be blocked. Or they can block the outlets on other grounds. For example, they could say they found propaganda of suicide or drugs [in the publications].”

Last month the State Duma investigation said it would [ask](#) the Foreign Ministry to consider revoking Deutsche Welle's right to work in the country for allegedly breaking laws on political impartiality.

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