

Russia Lawmakers Claim Foreign-Funded 'Camps' Train Protesters

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Alexander Zemlianichenko / AP / TASS

The Russian parliament's commission on foreign interference said it has found several "camps" that allegedly receive funding from abroad to train protesters, both in-person and online, the Kommersant business daily [reported](#) Tuesday.

Lawmakers formed the commission after this summer's wave of protests in Moscow, [accusing](#) several news outlets and the U.S. Embassy in Russia of meddling in Russia's internal affairs by allegedly promoting the protests and encouraging people to attend them. During its Nov. 14 meeting, the commission said it plans to send its findings on alleged meddling by foreign media, governments and NGOs to federal prosecutors.

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The commission found training centers for protesters in cities and regions across Russia, Kommersant cited an unnamed source as saying, as well as several "virtual" camps on social

networks. The lawmakers did not disclose the exact list of organizations or their locations.

The commission intends to introduce a bill that would make it a criminal offense to organize a protest after being trained in one of these camps, with prison terms for convicted offenders, Kommersant cited State Duma deputy and commission member Aldabi Shkhagoshev as saying.

Andrei Isaev, another Duma deputy, confirmed that the commission was preparing a bill but said it was “premature” to say whether it would introduce criminal penalties.

Lawyers told Kommersant that enforcing such a law would be “problematic,” citing the difficulties of finding evidence to prove that someone was specifically trained in organizing protests.

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