

Putin Increases Fines for 'Foreign Agents'

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The bill to impose heavy fines for repeat violations of Russia's "foreign agent" law has been in the works since 2017. **Anton Novoderezhkin / TASS**

Russian President Vladimir Putin has signed a law that [increases fines](#) for news media or their employees designated as “foreign agents” Monday.

The new fines come two weeks after Putin signed another piece of legislation allowing authorities to label individual journalists and bloggers “foreign agents.” Starting Feb. 1, 2020, any individual who distributes information online while receiving money from foreign sources or simply distributes foreign media online can be labeled a “foreign agent.”

Related article: [Putin Is Seeing 'Foreign Agents' Everywhere](#)

The three-tier system imposes fines for repeat offenders up to 100,000 rubles (\$1,600) for ordinary citizens, 200,000 rubles (\$3,200) for public officials and 5 million rubles (\$80,000) for legal entities.

In addition to the 100,000 ruble fine, ordinary citizens can be jailed for up to 15 days if they are found guilty of violating the “foreign agent” law twice or more within one year.

The fines come into force Feb. 1, 2020.

At least nine U.S.-funded news organizations have been [designated](#) “foreign agents” under the original law that Putin signed in 2017 in retaliation to the U.S. decision to restrict the Kremlin-run RT network.

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