

Russia Slaps Foreign Media, NGOs with 'Foreign Agent' and 'Undesirable Org' Labels

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The Russian Prosecutor General's Office said the civil society, independent media and education groups pose "a threat to the foundations of Russia's constitutional system and security." **Artyom Geodakyan / TASS**

Russia has listed four NGOs, two civil society groups and one media outlet as "foreign agents" and "undesirable organizations" amid a renewed crackdown on critical voices this week.

The Justice Ministry [labeled](#) three AIDS service organizations and one educational affiliate of exiled oligarch Mikhail Khodorkovsky's Open Russia pro-democracy group as "foreign agents" Monday.

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St. Petersburg's Humanitarian Action foundation, Oryol's Phoenix Plus [nonprofit](#), Yekaterinburg's Aktsent social and legal aid group and the Open St. Petersburg education project received the label for "influencing" state policy.

The designations come as Russian lawmakers this week [pushed through](#) legislation expanding the "foreign agent" label to any politically active, foreign-funded individual. Failure to comply could lead to up to five years in prison if President Vladimir Putin signs the proposals into law.

The Russian Prosecutor General's Office also [declared](#) the Prague Civil Society Centre and the Council of Europe's (CoE) Association of Schools of Political Studies "[undesirable](#)" organizations in separate decisions announced Monday and Thursday.

The civil society, independent media and education groups pose "a threat to the foundations of Russia's constitutional system and security," the Prosecutor's Office said.

A 2015 law allows Russian prosecutors to limit or halt the work of "undesirable" foreign groups, punishing violators with fines or prison terms up to six years.

The Czech information agency Medium-Orient, founder of the southern Russia-focused news website [Caucasus Times](#), also became the 12th foreign news outlet to be slapped with the "[foreign agent](#)" label.

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