

Russia Adds Women's Rights NGO to 'Foreign Agents' List

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Nasiliyu.net (“No to Violence”), which assists domestic violence victims, linked the move to its support for re-criminalizing domestic violence. nasiliu.net

Russia has labeled prominent women’s rights organization Nasiliyu.net (“No to Violence”) as a “foreign agent,” the Justice Ministry [announced](#) Tuesday.

The Justice Ministry’s addition of the NGO, which provides legal and psychological help to domestic violence victims, to the “foreign agent” registry comes amid fears of a renewed crackdown on critical voices ahead of Russia's 2021 legislative elections. Lawmakers pushed through controversial expansions to the “foreign agents” law last week which would allow any politically active, foreign-funded individual to be added to the list.

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Writing on Facebook, Nasiliyu.net director Anna Rivina [said](#) her organization was mainly

added to the list over its support for a bill that seeks to re-criminalize domestic violence and “5% [due to] LGBT propaganda.”

“They made us very angry, so in 2021 we will do more and be louder, more transparent and more bold the further they go,” Rivina said.

The Justice Ministry had launched an audit of the organization this month after it did not submit an application to be included in the “foreign agents” registry. Rivina said the ministry requested all documents related to the NGO’s financial activities and events as well as its partnership agreements.

Rivina also shared a screenshot of a quote from a Forbes Russia interview that was included in the documents the Justice Ministry sent her: “The situation really is funny in a morbid sense. If the issue of domestic violence was solved in our country, then we wouldn't need an organization like ours.”

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Women's rights advocate Alyona Popova pointed to the [detention](#) of U.S. citizen and human rights activist Vanessa Kogan on Tuesday as an example of Russian authorities’ disparate responses to domestic violence and perceived foreign threats. Kogan heads the Justice Initiative human rights organization in Russia, which was also recently added to the “foreign agents” list.

“Now they are trying to expel Vanessa from the country, just as they don’t expel domestic rapists,” Popova [said](#) on Facebook.

Russia's “foreign agent” law passed in 2012 requires labeled organizations to report their activities and face financial audits. Activists have denounced the law, saying it seeks to silence groups critical of the Kremlin’s human rights record. On Monday, Russia [added](#) individuals to the registry for the first time.

Russia decriminalized first-time domestic abuse offenses in 2017, a move that lawmakers had been working to overturn with new legislation.

Nasiliyu.net has been registered as an NGO since 2018.

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