

# Russia Labels Main LGBT Group 'Foreign Agent'

By [AFP](#)

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Zuma / TASS Russian authorities have launched a broad crackdown against LGBT groups as part of its conservative "traditional values" campaign

Russia on Monday declared the main group defending LGBTQ rights a "foreign agent" on Monday, as part of a continuing crackdown on media outlets and rights groups.

The ministry also declared several lawyers close to the Russian opposition "foreign agents."

The Russian LGBT Network, which was set up in 2006 and operates in several regions, was entered in the justice ministry's register of foreign agents, which already includes journalists, lawyers and activists.

The group provides legal assistance and support to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people and their families, according to its website.

It also carries out educational campaigns and collects evidence of discrimination on the basis

of sexual orientation.

In February, the group denounced the arrest of two Chechen men who were subsequently deported back to Chechnya.

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Rights groups have accused the authorities in the Russian republic of jailing and torturing homosexuals in secret prisons.

The classification as a "foreign agent" requires the group to make that status known in all its publications and on social media and to comply with a range of administrative procedures.

Reminiscent of the Soviet-era "enemy of the people" tag, it is designed, the authorities say, to target groups receiving "foreign funding" and engaging in "political activity."

Attacks on LGBTQ people are relatively frequent in Russia, where conservative and religious circles take a dim view of the community.

In 2013, Russia introduced a law banning homosexual "propaganda" aimed at minors, which served as a pretext for banning Pride marches and the display of the rainbow flags that are a symbol of the community.

Since 2020, the constitution specifies that marriage is a union between a man and a woman, effectively banning gay marriage.

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