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Russia Vows to Defend 'Traditional Values' Against 'Gay Propaganda'

By AFP

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TASS

Russia on Wednesday vowed to defend its "traditional" values against threats from the United States and so-called "gay propaganda" in a document signed by President Vladimir Putin.

The presidential decree, setting out official policy and entering force immediately, stresses the importance of "traditional values as the basis of Russian society."

It warns that Moscow must take "urgent measures" to ward off threats including those posed by terrorist groups, "certain mass media" and "the United States and other unfriendly foreign countries."

It also lists internal threats from "the activities of certain organizations and people on Russian soil."

These foes risk implanting "alien" ideas in Russian society and causing "the destruction of

the traditional family unit through the propaganda of nontraditional sexual relationships," the decree says, using a phrase used by the Kremlin to refer to LGBTQ relationships.

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The Orthodox Church welcomed the document as a way to "preserve our people and protect our children from being defiled," senior cleric Fyodor Lukyanov told state-run news agency TASS.

The mission statement comes as Russian lawmakers are pushing through amendments to toughen up a controversial 2013 law banning "gay propaganda" to minors, rewriting it to include adults as well.

Rights campaigners say the new amendments mean, in effect, that any public mention of same-sex relationships is being criminalized.

Putin's new decree also warns that the country's enemies are distorting "historical truth."

The former KGB agent has sought to associate his regime with Soviet-era successes and has gradually cracked down on the rights and freedoms gained after the breakup of the Soviet Union.

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