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Russian Presidential Hopeful Condemns 'Extremist' Designation of LGBT Community

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Yekaterina Duntsova. **Yekaterina Duntsova / Telegram**

Yekaterina Duntsova, a Russian journalist who earlier this month announced her bid to run for president, condemned the Russian Supreme Court's decision on Thursday to ban the so-called "international LGBT public movement."

"This is a dangerous decision, which has no clear guidelines for interpretation, and it can lead to the persecution of any Russian citizen," Duntsova wrote on the messaging app Telegram just minutes after the court's ruling was made public.

The journalist-turned-presidential hopeful accused Russian authorities of concealing their homophobic views beneath a smokescreen of concern about protecting children from harmful influences.

"This ill-conceived concern could lead to persecution of children themselves, for example, for

drawing a rainbow," she said.

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"It is imperative to respect the rights of every person and to avoid actions that could lead to restrictions on freedoms and the infringement of rights," she added.

An independent candidate with a pro-peace agenda, Duntsova hopes to run against President Vladimir Putin in next year's presidential election.

To join the race, she needs to secure the support of a 500-strong special interest group and collect 300,000 unique voter signatures from at least 40 regions of Russia.

"I want to show with my example that one can go and resist. I want to give hope to other people," Duntsova told The Moscow Times of her decision to run for office last week.

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