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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Russia's 'Extremist' Ban Fuels LGBT Flight

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Moscow's Domodedovo Airport. **Alexander Avilov / Moskva News Agency**

Russia's recent "extremist" designation of a loosely defined "LGBT movement" has led to a surge in emergency evacuations from the country, independent media reported Tuesday, citing the European human rights group for post-Soviet LGBT people, Equal PostOst.

Russia's Supreme Court on Thursday banned the so-called "international LGBT movement" — which does not formally exist — on claims of extremism.

Individuals face a maximum of six years in prison if convicted of involvement in an "extremist" organization.

Related article: Russian Presidential Hopeful Condemns 'Extremist' Designation of LGBT Community

Equal PostOst's co-founder Evelina Chaika told the news outlet Mozhem Obyasnit that her

NGO saw a sixfold increase in requests for relocations since the court ruling.

“We now get an average of 12 requests per hour. That’s more than 100 a day,” Chaika said.

Equal PostOst said it has urgently expanded its evacuations of Russian LGBTQ activists to safe European countries and stepped up its crowdfunding campaign to pay for flights and other emergency needs.

Activists warn that, by banning a vaguely defined movement, Russian authorities could prosecute anyone who has associated with LGBT lifestyles or symbols in public.

On Tuesday, Russian police placed anti-war LGBT activist Nikolai Rodkin on its wanted list on unspecified criminal charges.

It was not immediately clear whether his placement was linked to last week’s Supreme Court ruling.

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