

Russia Bans Nonexistent 'Anti-Russian Separatist Movement'

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"Map of Russia" flash mob in Moscow's Victory Park. **Sergei Kiselev / Moskva News Agency**

Russia's Supreme Court has banned the vaguely defined "Anti-Russian Separatist Movement" as an "extremist" organization, the independent news website [Mediazona reported](#) Friday.

Rights groups say they have not been able to find a formal organization called the "Anti-Russian Separatist Movement," leading to [speculation](#) that the authorities could use the designation as a pretext for wider criminal prosecutions of anti-war, anti-colonial or Indigenous rights activists.

Russia's Justice Ministry, which initiated the "extremism" claim in April, [defined](#) the "anti-Russian separatist" group as an "international public movement to destroy the multinational unity and territorial integrity of Russia."

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Mediazona said its correspondent asked a ministry official ahead of the hearing to rule on the designation whether they “have any guesses” about what constitutes an “anti-Russian separatist movement.”

“We don’t just guess, we know,” the Justice Ministry official was quoted as saying without commenting further.

Russia’s Supreme Court designated both the “Anti-Russian Separatist Movement” and its “structural divisions” after convening a closed-door hearing Friday, Mediazona said. The designation means anyone convicted of association with the vaguely defined organization could be imprisoned for up to six years.

The court previously banned the similarly nonexistent “Ya/My Furgal movement” in support of a jailed ex-governor, as well as the “international LGBT public movement,” which has prompted a sweeping crackdown on public displays of LGBTQ+ identities and lifestyles.

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