

Russian Lawmakers Pass Bill Expanding 'Undesirable' Label to Include State-Affiliated Orgs

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Lawmakers in Russia's lower-house State Duma [voted](#) Tuesday to expand the criteria for blacklisting organizations as "undesirable" to include any entity affiliated with a foreign government.

The 2015 law, initially aimed at foreign-funded NGOs, has gradually been extended to target independent news outlets, human rights groups, environmental organizations and educational institutions. The recent amendments [would empower](#) Russia's Justice Ministry to label any state-sponsored entity as "undesirable," imposing similar criminal penalties as those for NGOs.

Current law allows the Russian authorities to sentence members of "undesirable" groups to up to four years in prison, while leaders can face up to six years.

Experts believe the new legislation, if signed into law, could be used to target state-backed media outlets such as the BBC, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) and Deutsche Welle. To become law, the bill must be passed by the upper-house Federation Council and signed by President Vladimir Putin.

“Undesirable” organizations must cease all operations within Russia, and it is illegal for individuals and media outlets to republish or share their content.

Russia’s Justice Ministry has designated 178 organizations as “undesirable” — including The Moscow Times.

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