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Boris Nemtsov's Daughter Creates Non-Profit to Help Independent Russian Media

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Zhanna Nemtsova. **MSC / Kuhlmann (CC BY 3.0)**

Zhanna Nemtsova, the daughter of the late Kremlin critic Boris Nemtsov, announced the creation of a non-profit foundation aimed at helping Russian independent media, saying that Russian civil society lacks a "transparent and competitive" donor system.

Shortly after Moscow launched the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, the Russian government introduced draconian wartime censorship laws making it impossible for journalists to do any reporting that runs counter to the Kremlin's official line on what it insists on calling a "special military operation."

Scores of media outlets and other public figures have since been branded "foreign agents" or "undesirable organizations" — including The Moscow Times. Many independent journalists have either been imprisoned for their reporting or forced to flee abroad, where they face challenges receiving residency status and funding to support their work.

Nemtsova announced late Monday the creation of the Foundation for Democracy and Liberal Values (FDLV), with the first grants offered by the organization going toward financing independent media outlets.

“It’s been obvious to me for several years that Russian civil society and media lack their own transparent and competitive donor mechanism,” Nemtsova wrote on Facebook. “The absence of such a mechanism prevents private capital from being attracted to civic projects.”

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Nemtsova said FDLV receives its funding from an unnamed Russian-born tech entrepreneur, who asked to keep his name secret “for the time being.”

“His name is unknown to the general public and he has never been involved in the organized support of civil society and media,” she wrote.

FDLV’s website lists Nemtsova as its director of grants management and operations and Yale graduate student Tanya Kotelnykova as its president and executive director. The foundation, which says its priority is to create a “more resilient media ecosystem,” opened a call for grant applications with a deadline of Dec. 1.

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