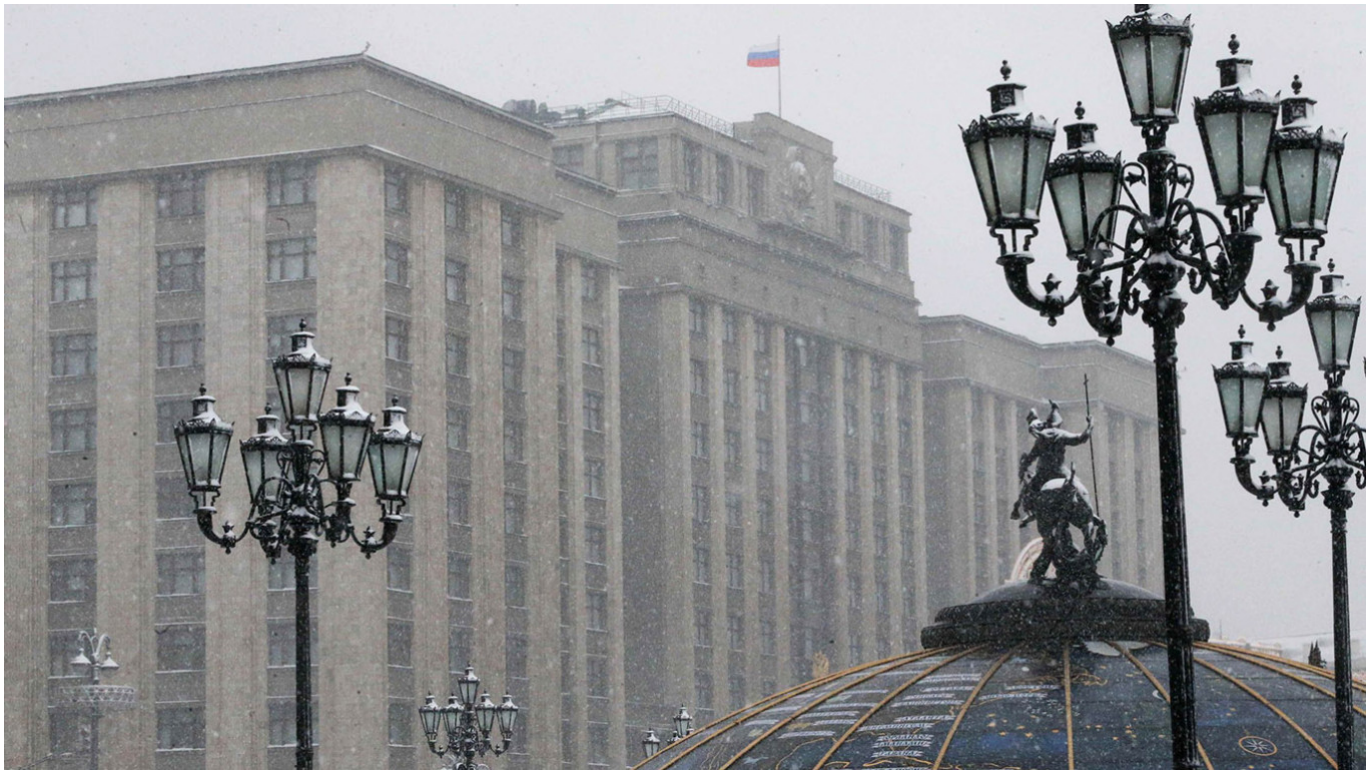
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Russia Moves to Strip 'Foreign Agents' of Income From Assets

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Russian State Duma. **duma.gov.ru**

Russian lawmakers passed a bill Tuesday banning "foreign agents" from obtaining money through property sales or royalty payments for creative works, as the authorities continue targeting exiled war critics seen as traitors and enemies of the state.

"Foreign agents" earning income from assets based in Russia will now be forced to use special ruble accounts that will only be accessible after they are no longer labeled "foreign agents" by the authorities. The move effectively bans these individuals from accessing the money they earn through various income streams.

"Those who betrayed our country will not enrich themselves at the expense of its citizens," lower-house State Duma Speaker Vyacheslav Volodin wrote on Telegram.

The Duma voted unanimously in the second and third readings in favor of a bill that requires special ruble accounts for the sale or rental of property and vehicles owned by "foreign agents," as well as for interest on their deposits and dividends.

Those requirements were added to initial plans for special ruble accounts on foreign agents' earnings from intellectual activities when the bill was passed in its first reading. Those activities include brands, scientific works and trademarked inventions, as well as literature, art, performances and broadcasting.

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"We need to stop those who seek to destroy the country," said Volodin during the vote, describing the targeted foreign agents as "scoundrels, traitors and hirelings" who donate to the Ukrainian army using their Russia-based earnings.

The bill now faces a single vote in the upper-house Federation Council, after which President Vladimir Putin is expected to sign it into law. A total of 429 out of 450 Duma members are listed as the bill's co-authors.

Hundreds of cultural figures, journalists, businesspeople, as well as news outlets and organizations, have been branded "foreign agents" — which carries negative Soviet-era connotations — since Russia introduced the legislation in 2012. The Moscow Times was included in the "foreign agents" registry last year.

Russian authorities have moved to further tighten legislation targeting "foreign agents" this year, including banning them from advertising and running for political office.

Independent media outlets have reported that the number of criminal cases against "foreign agents" in Russia more than doubled in 2023 compared with the previous year.

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