

Russian Lawmakers Pass Bill Paving Way for Taliban's Removal From Terrorist List

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Taliban representatives at a meeting of the Moscow Format consultations on Afghanistan in Kazan Town Hall. **Yegor Aleyev / TASS**

Russian lawmakers [passed](#) a bill on Tuesday that would give courts the power to remove groups from the country's list of terrorist organizations, a move that could allow Moscow to lift its formal recognition of the Taliban as a terrorist group.

The bill was submitted to the lower-house State Duma last month as top Russian security officials vowed during a visit to Afghanistan to remove the Taliban from Russia's list of banned organizations. The Kremlin has courted relations with the Taliban since the Islamist group seized power after the United States' chaotic withdrawal in 2021.

Russia's State Duma voted in favor of the bill, which outlines a legal mechanism for groups to be removed from the country's official list of outlawed "terrorist" groups.

That mechanism would establish a legal framework in which Russia's Prosecutor General could file a request with a court outlining that a group has "ceased" its activities "in support of terrorism." A judge could then rule to remove the designation.

However, the Taliban's expected delisting from Russia's terrorist registry would not amount to a formal recognition of its government, or what it calls the "Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan" — a step no country has yet taken.

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Following its passage in the State Duma's second and third readings, the bill now faces a single vote in the upper-house Federation Council. President Vladimir Putin is then expected to sign it into law.

Putin called the Taliban "allies in the fight against terrorism" earlier this year, while Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov has urged the West to remove sanctions on Afghanistan and take "responsibility" for reconstruction efforts in the country.

Russia's allies in Central Asia — Afghanistan's neighbors — are also pledging better relations with the Taliban. Kazakhstan removed the Taliban from its list of banned "terrorist" groups at the end of 2023.

After seizing power in 2021, the Taliban has enforced an extreme form of Islamic law that effectively bans women from public life. Russia banned the Taliban as a terrorist organization in 2003.

AFP contributed reporting.

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