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Russia Bans Japanese NGO Amid Dispute Over Kuril Islands

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Yuzhno-Kurilsk settlement on Kunashir Island. **kunashir.ru**

Russian authorities on Monday designated Japan's Northern Territories Issue Association as an "undesirable organization," accusing it of promoting revanchist ideas and undermining Russian sovereignty.

The Tokyo-based group advocates for Japan's claim over Russia's Kuril Islands — known in Japan as the Northern Territories — whose disputed status has prevented the two countries from signing a World War II peace treaty.

Russia's Prosecutor General's Office claimed the group lobbies for the islands' return to Japan, distributes "propaganda" and holds educational events, all while being funded by the Japanese government despite presenting itself as an NGO.

"In the darkness of activists from the Land of the Rising Sun... the Prosecutor General's Office was able to make out the hallmarks of revanchist ideology," it said in a statement on Telegram.

The “undesirable” label bans the organization’s activities in Russia, criminalizes cooperation with it and exposes its staff to prosecution.

Founded in 2003, the Northern Territories Issue Association says its mission is to raise awareness of the territorial dispute, conduct research and support aging former residents of the islands.

Last year, Russian lawmaker Vasily Piskaryov warned that the group could become a potential target under new legislation expanding the scope of Russia’s “undesirable organizations” law.

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