

Russian Supreme Court Removes Taliban From List of Terrorist Organizations

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Taliban members visiting Kazan in Russia's republic of Tatarstan. **Yegor Aleyev / TASS**

Russia's Supreme Court on Thursday formally removed the Taliban from the country's list of banned terrorist organizations, a symbolic move underscoring Moscow's warming ties with Afghanistan's de facto rulers.

"The previously established ban on the Taliban's activities... has been suspended," Supreme Court Judge Oleg Nefedov was quoted as saying by the state-run news agency TASS. "The decision enters into legal force immediately."

Thursday's ruling, which was made during a closed-door hearing, follows a [request](#) last month from the Prosecutor General's Office to remove the Taliban from its list of terrorist organizations.

While the move does not amount to formal diplomatic recognition, it clears a legal obstacle

for Russian officials engaging with the Taliban at official events and is widely seen as a step toward normalization.

The Taliban authorities praised the move as a “significant development in relations between Afghanistan and Russia” in a foreign ministry statement.

“With this decision, the only remaining obstacle to further political and economic cooperation between the two countries has been removed,” Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi said in a meeting with Moscow's Ambassador to Kabul Dmitry Zhirnov, according to the statement.

Related article: [Why Russia Doesn't Think the Taliban Are Terrorists Anymore](#)

Representatives of the Taliban have made several high-level visits to Russia in recent years, including participation in Russia's flagship economic forum in St. Petersburg in 2022 and 2024. They also met with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov in October 2023.

Russia first banned the Taliban as a terrorist organization in 2003 over its alleged support for Islamist insurgents in the North Caucasus. However, since the militant group seized control of Afghanistan in August 2021, the Kremlin has strengthened ties with the country's de facto rulers.

Russia is not alone in shifting its posture. Kazakhstan removed the Taliban from its terrorist list last year, and China has deepened economic ties, becoming the first country to appoint a new ambassador to Afghanistan in 2023.

Still, no country has formally recognized the Taliban government, which remains diplomatically isolated despite growing regional engagement.

AFP contributed reporting.

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