

# Russia Moves to Toughen ‘Foreign Agent’ Law

September 25, 2025



Voting in the Russian Duma. [duma.gov.ru](https://duma.gov.ru)

Russian lawmakers on Thursday [approved](#) a bill that would allow law enforcement authorities to more easily bring charges against people or entities designated as “foreign agents.”

If signed into law, a single violation of the “foreign agents” law could trigger criminal prosecution. Currently, charges can only be brought after two violations within one calendar year.

The bill passed its third and final reading in the State Duma on Thursday and now requires approval from the Federation Council before being sent to President Vladimir Putin for signature.

Authorities have increasingly used the “foreign agent” label — a term with negative Soviet-era connotations — against individuals and organizations that accept foreign funding.

Those designated must submit detailed quarterly financial reports to the Justice Ministry and

place prominent disclaimers on all publications and social media posts.

Nearly 1,000 individuals, organizations and news outlets, including The Moscow Times, have been branded “foreign agents” since the label was first introduced in 2012.

The law was [expanded](#) in 2022 to consider any kind of foreign support, not just funding, as grounds for being labeled a “foreign agent.” That revision also gave authorities the power to block websites without a court order and barred “foreign agents” from receiving state funding, working with minors or teaching at public universities.

In April 2025, the law was further [broadened](#) to allow the designation of those who involve others in gathering military-related information that could be used against Russia.

That same month, Putin signed another law [banning](#) “foreign agents” from carrying out educational or awareness-raising activities, receiving support from local authorities or serving on the boards of state corporations. The restrictions came into force on Sept. 1.

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