

Russia Blacklists Human Rights Watch as 'Undesirable'

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The Russian Justice Ministry building. **Sergei Bulkin / TASS**

Russia's Justice Ministry on Friday [designated](#) Human Rights Watch as an "undesirable" organization.

The designation bans the U.S.-headquartered nonprofit from operating in Russia. Under Russian law, individuals found to be affiliated with "undesirable" organizations face up to four years in prison, while organization leaders risk up to six years.

In an interview, the influential body said it was "not surprised" by the designation and vowed to continue its work remotely.

"We are actually going to work even harder to expose the staggering crackdown by the Kremlin on Russian civil society and to report on Russian crimes in Ukraine," Tanya Lokshina, senior associate director of the group's Europe and Central Asia division, told AFP.

HRW was among a number of international organizations and foreign NGOs whose local

offices Russian authorities [shut down](#) in the first months of the full-scale invasion of Ukraine over alleged legal violations.

Russia's Prosecutor General's Office, which usually announces "undesirable" designations, has not issued any statement on HRW's blacklisting.

Founded in 1978 and with a presence in more than 90 countries, HRW has documented human rights violations in Russia for around 30 years. It has [accused](#) the Russian military of committing war crimes in Ukraine.

Russia introduced its "undesirable" law in 2015, using it to crack down on independent media, opposition groups and foreign organizations. Hundreds of organizations are currently blacklisted, including The Moscow Times.

AFP contributed reporting.

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