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# Russia Designates ‘Mr. Nobody Against Putin’ Co-Director ‘Foreign Agent’

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Pavel Talankin. **Nikita Mouravieff (CC BY-SA 4.0)**

Russia’s Justice Ministry on Friday designated Pavel Talankin, the co-director of “Mr. Nobody Against Putin,” as a “foreign agent,” days after the film won best documentary at the 2026 Academy Awards.

Talankin has lived in the Czech Republic since leaving Russia in 2024 to complete work on the award-winning film that chronicles the indoctrination of schoolchildren into Russia’s state ideology during the war in Ukraine.

In a message sent to The Moscow Times, Talankin said he had just found out about the designation and was still processing the news.

“I’m a foreign agent for the first time, so I don’t know how to react,” he said.

“Honestly, I didn’t expect [to be designated as a ‘foreign agent’]. I was expecting angry comments and negative reactions, but I never thought it would come to this,” Talankin said.

**Related article**: Pavel Talankin Was a 'Nobody Against Putin.' Now He Has an Oscar.

A judge in the Ural Mountains city of Chelyabinsk this week banned "Mr. Nobody Against Putin" from being distributed in Russia after prosecutors argued that it negatively portrays the country.

Talankin shot footage for the film when he worked as a school videographer in the Chelyabinsk region town of Karabash.

His co-director, American filmmaker David Borenstein, said he sought to frame Talankin's footage around broader themes of free speech and indoctrination.

The film premiered last year at the Sundance Film Festival and the Göteborg Film Festival. It also won best documentary at the British Academy Film Awards.

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