

Russia's Foreign Agent Media Law

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In May 2015, Vladimir Putin signed Russia's Law on Undesirable Organizations.

It targets foreign organizations posing a "threat to the constitutional order and defense capability or the security of the Russian state" - subversive groups no governments should tolerate..

The law lets the Prosecutor General's Office and Foreign Ministry declare activities of "undesirable foreign organizations" illegal - ones considered a threat to Russia's security.

Non-compliance is punishable by administrative penalties. Repeated violations mandate imprisonment for up to six years. Russian citizens and organizations working with banned groups face fines only.

Russia's 2012 Foreign Agents Law requires NGOs engaged in political activities to register as foreign agents or face stiff fines. They're prohibited from supporting political parties - free to engage in other activities.

Many so-called NGOs are agents of foreign governments, notably America's State Department-funded National Endowment for Democracy - charged with subverting it in targeted countries.

Washington rejects democratic governance at home and abroad, falsely claiming it fosters what it opposes worldwide.

In response to the Trump administration requiring RT America to register as a foreign agent under the country's Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA), Moscow promised tit-for-tat retaliation.

Earlier in November, Russian lower and upper house lawmakers passed legislation, designating media in the country receiving funding from abroad as foreign agents.

On November 25, Vladimir Putin signed it into law. Henceforth, media named foreign agents by Russia's Justice Ministry will face the same requirements and restrictions as NGOs labeled foreign agents.

Russian upper house Federation Council constitutional legislation and state construction committee chairman Andrey Klishas said the new law isn't about censorship.

It mandates certain obligations on media designated as foreign agents. Russian media aren't targeted.

Designated foreign ones must publish a notice, indicating they're functioning as foreign agents. They must report regularly on their activities, provide information on their financing and staff - requirements the same as imposed on RT America.

Russia's Justice Ministry said it notified the Voice of America, Current Time (supervised by the Broadcasting Board of Governors - overseeing all US foreign propaganda operations), Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, and other unnamed media about their possible designation as foreign agents.

If any media fail to register as required, they'll fall under the 2012 Foreign Agents Law, required to report regularly on their finances, funding sources and activities. Annually they're audited for compliance.

Inspections can occur any time in response to complaints. Administrative or criminal liability may follow failure to comply with requirements. Their broadcasting signals may be blocked and web sites shut down.

Putin explained Russian laws on undesirable organizations, NGOs and foreign agents are necessary to prevent or limit other nations from interfering in Russia's internal affairs - America the lead offender.

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My newest book as editor and contributor is titled "Flashpoint in Ukraine: How the US Drive for Hegemony Risks WW III."

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