

Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

Bilagsnr.:	574
Land:	Rusland
Kilde:	RFE/RL
Titel:	Putin Signs Amendments Allowing Large Fines For 'Foreign Agents' Law Violations
Udgivet:	16. december 2019
Optaget på baggrundsmaterialet:	2. januar 2020



RUSSIA

Putin Signs Amendments Allowing Large Fines For 'Foreign Agents' Law Violations

December 16, 2019 15:28 GMT By [RFE/RL](#)

Russian President Vladimir Putin on December 16 signed amendments to the Administrative Violations Code that allow hefty fines for violating the controversial law on "foreign agents," which critics say is used to muzzle dissent and discourage the free exchange of ideas and a free press.

According to the changes, individuals who violate the law more than twice in a 12-month period will have to pay a fine of up to 10,000 rubles (\$159) for the first violation, and up to 100,000 rubles (\$1,590) or 15 days in jail for repeat violations.

Organizations will be obliged to pay a penalty of up to 1 million rubles (\$15,900) for the first violation, and up to 5 million rubles (\$79,500) for subsequent violations of the law.

The amendments were approved by lawmakers earlier this month.

Two weeks earlier, Putin signed into law a bill that gives authorities the power to label reporters who work for organizations officially listed as foreign agents as foreign agents themselves.

The tag will be applied to individuals who collaborate with foreign media outlets and receive financial or other material support from them.

Russia passed the original foreign agent law -- which requires all NGOs receiving foreign funding to register -- in 2012 following a major wave of anti-government protests. Putin blamed Western influence and money for those protests.

Critics of the law say it stigmatizes organizations with the designation and would do the same to journalists if they are labeled as foreign agents.

RFE/RL President Jamie Fly said on December 4 that the **law ratchets up pressure** on Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) correspondents in Russia who provide one of the few remaining alternatives to Kremlin-controlled news.

In a tweet on December 16, Fly said the law will not deter RFE/RL reporters from doing their jobs.

Last month, Russia's Justice Ministry listed RFE/RL's Sever.Realii website as a "foreign agent," saying the decision was based on conclusions made by the parliamentary committee on an investigation into meddling in the country's internal affairs.

In December 2017, the Justice Ministry listed Current Time TV, several RFE/RL services and projects, such as its Russian Service, Tatar-Bashkir Service, Sibir.Realii, Idel.Realii, Factograph, Kavkaz Realii, and Krym.Realii, as well as the Voice of America, as "foreign mass media performing the functions of a foreign agent."

Russian officials have said the law is a "symmetrical response" after Russia's state-funded channel RT -- which U.S. authorities accuse of spreading propaganda -- was required to register its U.S. operating unit under the U.S. Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA).

U.S. officials have said the action is not symmetrical, arguing that the U.S. and Russian laws differ and that Russia uses its "foreign agent" legislation to silence dissent and discourage the free exchange of ideas.

Human Rights Watch, a U.S.-based rights group, in 2017 called the law "devastating" for local NGOs, saying more than a dozen had been forced to close their doors.

With reporting by TASS and Meduza

RFE/RL

RFE/RL journalists report the news in 26 languages in 22 countries where a free press is banned by the government or not fully established. We provide what many people cannot get locally: uncensored news, responsible discussion, and open debate.

webteam@rferl.org

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty © 2019 RFE/RL, Inc. All Rights Reserved.