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Amnesty International (Author)

Russia: Amnesty International declared “undesirable organization” amid escalating crackdown on dissent

Reacting to the news that the Russian authorities have declared Amnesty International an “undesirable organization” thereby criminalizing its activities and any association with the organization in Russia, Agnès Callamard, Amnesty International’s Secretary General, said:

“This decision is part of the Russian government’s broader effort to silence dissent and isolate civil society. In a country where scores of activists and dissidents have been imprisoned, killed or exiled, where independent media has been smeared, blocked or forced to self-censor, and where civil society organizations have been outlawed or liquidated, you must be doing something right if the Kremlin bans you.

“The authorities are deeply mistaken if they believe that by labelling our organization “undesirable” we will stop our work documenting and exposing human rights violations – quite the opposite. We will not give in to the threats and will continue undeterred to work to ensure that people in Russia are able to enjoy their human rights without discrimination. We will keep documenting and speaking worldwide about the war crimes committed in Ukraine by Russia. We will redouble our efforts to expose Russia’s egregious human rights violations both at home and abroad.

“We will never stop fighting for the release of prisoners of conscience detained for standing up for human rights or for the repeal of repressive laws that prevent people in Russia from speaking up against injustice. We will continue to work relentlessly to ensure that all those who are responsible for committing grave human rights violations, whether in Russia, Ukraine, or elsewhere, face justice. Put simply, no authoritarian assault will silence our fight for justice. Amnesty will never give up or back down in its fight for upholding human rights in Russia and beyond.”

Background

On 19 May 2025, the Russian Prosecutor General's Office declared Amnesty International an "undesirable organization" under repressive 2015 Russian legislation which allows the authorities to ban arbitrarily any foreign organization and criminalize its activities in Russia. The announcement accused Amnesty International of promoting "Russophobic projects" and indicated that it was prompted by the organization's work on freedom of expression and association in Russia, and its documentation and exposition of crimes under international law committed by Russian forces in Ukraine. The decision is based on a Russian law which in itself violates international law, and the language of the decision goes against facts accusing Amnesty International of activities which, within its statutory documents and policies, it is prevented from undertaking.

The designation comes three years after the Russian authorities blocked access to Amnesty International's websites in Russia and de-registered – [effectively closed down](#) – the organization's office in Moscow. The designation puts at risk of prosecution in Russia partner organizations and individual supporters, journalists, other persons who now work with, or are seen by the authorities as supporting or promoting, the organization.

Under Russian legislation, participation in the activities of an "undesirable organization" is punishable by law. First-time "offenses" may result in administrative fines of up to 15,000 rubles (around US\$185). Repeated violations as well as funding or managing such organizations carry criminal liability and can lead to prison sentences of up to six years. The law has previously been applied to the distribution or reposting of any materials from the designated organization, including publications and hyperlinks predating its designation as "undesirable".

This designation places Amnesty International among dozens of independent NGOs and media outlets that have been targeted in recent years as part of a sweeping campaign to suppress dissent and dismantle civil society in Russia and prevent international watchdogs and partners from providing support or showing solidarity with them. These moves are the backbone of a pattern whereby the Russian authorities are using authoritarian practices to silence voices, undermine accountability and entrench power.

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Associated documents

19 May 2025 | [Amnesty International](#) (Author)

Russian Federation

Amnesty International has been designated as "undesirable organisation" by Russian authorities for promoting "Russophobic projects"

[Russland stuft Amnesty als "unerwünschte Organisation" ein](#)
(Appeal or News Release, German)

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