

PETITION



To: Vladimir Putin - President of the Russian Federation

I Call on President Putin to Uphold Human Rights

Over the past year, Russian authorities have passed a series of laws that restrict the rights to freedom of expression, association, and assembly. These laws obstruct the legitimate role of civil society in Russia and suppress initiative, creativity and development of non-governmental organizations.

The legislative provisions in question include:

- Re-criminalisation of libel punishable by even heftier fines, which is likely to inhibit criticism of public officials and policies by the media and NGOs.
- Introduction of restrictive rules on public protests, with exorbitantly high penalties for their violation. These rules have had a chilling effect on the right to peaceful assembly.
- Introduction of a broad new legal definition of “treason,” which could potentially criminalize human rights activism.
- Introduction of new regulations for non-profit and non-governmental organizations obliging those who receive funding from foreign sources and are engaged in a vaguely described “political activities” (including advocacy and influencing public opinion) to register and publicly identify themselves as “foreign agents.” Not only does the law impose burdensome reporting obligations on foreign-funded NGOs, it puts them at risk of closure and persecution.
- A bill introducing hefty fines for “propaganda of homosexuality among minors”. If passed, this bill will outlaw public events organized by LGBTI communities and curtail activities by LGBTI organizations.

We believe that these laws are inconsistent with Russia’s international obligations and the Russian Federation’s own Constitution and must be repealed. Such restrictive legislation puts Russian civil society at risk of being sucked into isolation – not behind an iron curtain, but a legal one.

We call on you to uphold the rights to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly in Russia.

Name	City	Signature
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Copies of this letter to:

- Botschaft der Russischen Föderation in der Schweiz, Postfach 268, 3000 Bern