

Levada Center to Reject Foreign Grants

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Independent pollster Levada Center will not accept any more foreign grants while its status hangs in the balance, Interfax reported Thursday.

In mid-May prosecutors issued a warning to the polling agency citing a breach of legislation passed in November which requires politically engaged NGOs that receive foreign funding to register as "foreign agents."

According to the prosecutors, Levada Center received foreign funds for its sociological research and publications which amounted to engaging in political activities within Russia.

If Levada Center is forced to register as a "foreign agent" it will be unable to properly conduct political polls and may face closure, said the organization's head Lev Gudkov.

"If that happens, it will have disastrous consequences for us, completely changing our relationship with everyone, including the media, and creating serious problems," he added.

Levada Center's deputy head Alexei Grazhdankin said the rejection of foreign grants will not have much impact on their financial position, as they comprise only 1.5-2 percent of its total budget, ITAR-TASS reported.

Since March, the government has carried out hundreds of raids on NGO offices around Russia under the so-called foreign agents law.

Levada Center was established in 2003 and has gained a reputation as Russia's most independent and reliable pollster.

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