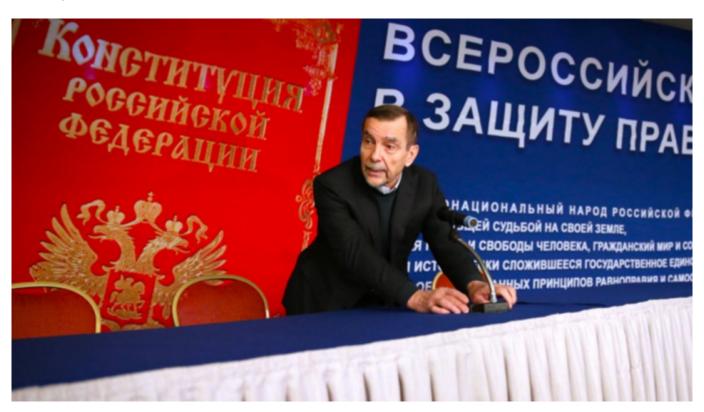


## Prominent Human Rights NGO Labeled 'Foreign Agent' in Russia

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Lev Ponomaryov Anton Novoderzhkin / TASS

A prominent Russian civil rights group has been blacklisted as a "foreign agent" months after its leader spent time behind bars over a protest, the Justice Ministry has said.

Russia's Justice Ministry <u>initiated</u> an inspection of Lev Ponomaryov's "For Human Rights" group for engaging in suspected political activity while receiving money from abroad in December. Ponomaryov, 77, <u>spent</u> 16 days in jail that month for allegedly calling for an unauthorized protest against the detention of a group of teenagers accused of extremism.

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The Justice Ministry <u>added</u> "For Human Rights" to its registry of foreign agents on Wednesday. A total of 69 NGOs are currently listed as foreign agents in Russia.

"What are we going to do? We'll be foreign agents. I hope they don't shoot us," Ponomaryov told the Kommersant business daily after the ruling.

"For Human Rights" was previously <u>labeled</u> a foreign agent in December 2014, a designation that was pulled in 2015.

*Update: The Justice Ministry later listed two more of Ponomaryov's NGOs as "foreign agents," including the In the Defense of the Rights of Prisoners Foundation and Goryachaya Liniya (Hotline).* 

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