



16.04.2026

## **Rule 9.2 submission on the implementation of individual and general measures in the case of Ecodefence and others v. Russia**



MEMORIAL  
HUMAN RIGHTS  
DEFENCE CENTRE



by the NGOs Memorial Human Rights Defence Centre and OVD-Info

### **INTRODUCTION**

This submission is prepared in accordance with Rule 9.2. of the Rules of the Committee of Ministers by the NGOs Memorial Human Rights Defence Centre, OVD-Info (see Appendix for details of these organisations). The submission

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examines the current situation with the implementation of the case and provides recommendations concerning the implementation of this judgement.

The submission follows on and updates the joint Rule 9 submission sent by these organisations in March 2024.<sup>1</sup>

## **I. MAIN FINDINGS OF THE ECTHR IN THE ECODEFENCE CASE**

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- 1 The Court found that the application of the Russian legislation on foreign agents (hereinafter—Foreign Agents Act) to non-governmental organisations and their directors was neither prescribed by law nor necessary in a democratic society in violation of Article 11 (freedom of association) of the Convention.
- 2 The Foreign Agents Act was a series of laws that designated as ‘foreign agent’s NGOs, media, and individuals that received foreign funding and undertook “political activities.” The “political activities” were understood broadly, including all attempts to influence the authorities as well as on the issues of protection of civil and political rights. Moreover, the authorities acted indiscriminately without differentiating between the organisations’ activities and their directors or members acting in their personal capacity.
- 3 The Foreign Agents Act contained no rules regarding the purpose of “foreign funding” and did not require the authorities to establish any link between such funding and the alleged “political activities” of the organisation. The absence of clear and foreseeable criteria gave the authorities unfettered discretion to assert that the applicant organisations had received “foreign funding.”
- 4 The Court held that attaching the label of a “foreign agent” to applicant organisations was unjustified and prejudicial and also resulted in a strong deterrent and stigmatising effect on their activities. That label portrayed them as being under foreign control, disregarding that they considered themselves members of national civil society working to uphold human rights, the rule of law, and human development for the benefit of Russian society and

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- 5** The applicant organisations and their directors were targeted by a combination of inspections, new registration requirements, sanctions, restrictions on funding sources, and the nature of the activities, which the Foreign Agents Act imposed. The authorities failed to put forward “relevant and sufficient” reasons for imposing such additional requirements on the applicant organisations solely on account of their inclusion in the register of “foreign agents.”
- 6** The applicants had to significantly alter their conduct to reduce the risk of facing penalties under the Foreign Agents Act. For example, the applicants had been confronted with a choice between either refusing all “foreign funding” in the broadest possible interpretation of the term or incurring additional expenses and abiding by the other requirements. By imposing this choice on applicant organisations, the Foreign Agents Act made them opt for exclusively domestic or foreign funding, thereby effectively restricting the available funding options. The specified measures resulted in the dissolution of many applicant organisations.
- 7** The authorities also introduced very high fines and criminal liability for the violations of the Foreign Agents Act, which was not proportionate to the aim pursued.
- 8** The cumulative effect of the specified restrictions placed a significant “chilling effect” on the choice to seek or accept any amount of foreign funding, however insignificant, in a context where opportunities for domestic funding were rather limited, especially concerning politically or socially sensitive topics or domestically unpopular causes. The measures accordingly could not

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- 9 The Court also found a violation of Article 34 of the Convention (relating to the right of individual petition) due to the enforcement of a dissolution order against International Memorial (a sister organisation of Memorial Human Rights Centre), ignoring an interim measure from the Court requiring authorities to suspend the dissolution.

## **II. THE CURRENT SITUATION WITH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CASE**

### **a. Individual measures**

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- 1** The situation since 2024 has not improved: the Russian Federation continues to fail to pay just satisfaction to the applicant organisations, and the authorities did not revoke the designation of the applicants as “foreign agents”—at least on substantive grounds.
- 2** The ECtHR put particular focus on the liquidation of the International Memorial and of the Memorial Human Rights Centre, finding a violation of Article 34 of the Convention. For this reason, this section will provide an update since our joint Rule 9 submission of February 2024 on the ongoing direct and indirect consequences of the designation and liquidation of these organisations.
- 3** Since 2024, Russia has not reversed the liquidation of the Memorial Human Rights Center and the International Memorial. Instead the authorities continue to persecute organizations and individuals associated with the Memorial movement.

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4 In 2025, the Ministry of Justice added the “Anti-Discrimination Center Memorial”<sup>3</sup> and “Political prisoners support. Memorial” to the register of “foreign agents.”<sup>4</sup> In addition, Natalia Sekretareva, Anastasia Garina, Tamilla Imanova, Violetta Fitsner, Denis Shedov, Alexander Cherkasov, Elena Zhemkova, Nikolai Bobrinsky, all associated with Memorial, were added to the register of foreign agents. They unsuccessfully challenged the designations in court. Further, Russian authorities subjected them to administrative prosecution for the failure to comply with the “foreign agent” legislation:

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- 4.1** On 2 October 2025, the Nikulinsky District Court of Moscow sentenced Natalia Sekretareva, the head of the legal department of the “Memorial” Human Rights Defence Center. Ms Sekretareva was found guilty of “carrying out activities as a foreign agent by a person not included in the register of foreign agents” (part 1 of the Article 19.34 of the Code of the Administrative Offences (CAO)). She was fined 30 000 RUB [326 euro].
- 4.2** On 16 October 2025, the Preobrazhensky District Court of Moscow sentenced Anastasia Garina, the executive director of the “Memorial” Human Rights Defence Center. Ms Garina was also found guilty under part 1 of the Article 19.34 of the CAO). She was fined 30 000 rubles [326 euro].
- 4.3** On 8 December 2025, the Sovetskiy District Court of the city of Nizhny Novgorod sentenced Tamilla Imanova, the lawyer of the “Memorial” Human Rights Defence Center. Ms Imanova was also found guilty under part 1 of the Article 19.34 of the CAO). She was fined 30 000 rubles [326 euro].
- 4.4** On 13 November 2025, the central Court of Kaliningrad registered an administrative protocol against Violetta Fitsner. She was charged with “failure to submit information about foreign agents to the competent body by a foreign agent” (part 2 of the Article 19.34 of the CAO). On 29 January 2026, the court found her guilty. She was fined 30 000 rubles [326 euro].
- 4.5** On 4 December 2025, the Kletnyanskiy district Court of Bryansk region sentenced Denis Shedov, the

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- 4.6** On 12 December 2025, the Meshchansky Court of Moscow sentenced Sergei Davidis, the head of the project “Support of political prisoners. Memorial.” Mr Davidis was found guilty under part 1 of the Article 19.34 of the CAO). He was fined 300 000 rubles [~3,260 euro] on behalf of “Support of political prisoners. Memorial.” Previously, Mr Davidis was found guilty of justifying terrorism, sentenced in absentia to six years in prison, and added to the list of extremists and terrorists.<sup>5</sup>
- 5** In addition to the law on “foreign agents,” Russia is using the law on “undesirable organizations” to persecute organizations registered abroad. In February 2026, Russian authorities labeled “Zukunft Memorial” and “International Memorial Association” as such. Both of these organizations are registered outside of Russia and do not conduct any activities inside the country.
- 6** Finally, on 27 March 2026, we received information that the Ministry of Justice filed a claim to the Supreme Court of Russia requesting to designate the “International Movement Memorial” as extremist. The court hearing will be held on April 9 behind closed doors.

## **b. General measures**

### **i. New amendments to the legislation on “foreign agents”**

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- 1** The latest development since 2024 concerning the Russian legislation on “foreign agents” shows that the Government is not only failing to execute the judgment of the ECtHR but also continues to expand the law, making it broader, more vague and repressive.<sup>6</sup>
- 2** On 28 February 2024, Russian authorities adopted a law prohibiting advertising on any “foreign agent” public resources.<sup>7</sup>
- 3** On 6 May 2024, Russian authorities adopted a law banning “foreign agents” from participating as candidates in elections at both the federal and local levels. The law also prohibited the “foreign agents” of being observers and representatives of the candidates during the elections.<sup>8</sup>
- 4** On 28 December 2024, Russian authorities adopted a law introducing “special bank accounts” for “foreign agents.” According to the law, “foreign agents” income from the sale and lease of real estate and vehicles, as well as from dividends and interest on deposits, will be credited to special bank ruble accounts. The same applies to royalties “from the use of intellectual property and brands.” The “foreign agents” are also required to open these “special bank accounts.” In practice, the authorities open these accounts by themselves without individuals’ participation. The “foreign agents” will be able to manage the funds transferred to these accounts only after their “foreign agent” status is removed.

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- 5** On 8 April 2025, Russian authorities adopted a law introducing a complete ban on “foreign agents” from engaging in educational and outreach activities. Previously, these activities were only prohibited for “foreign agents” regarding minors. Organisations with “foreign agent” status must have their licenses for such activities revoked and must be unable to obtain new ones. The law also banned “foreign agents” from receiving municipal financial assistance and prohibited the inclusion of them in the register of socially oriented organisations. In addition, the law prohibited the “foreign agents” from entering the governing bodies of state corporations.<sup>9</sup>
- 6** On 17 June 2025, Russian authorities adopted a law allowing the security forces to undertake an administrative investigation against the “foreign agents” and to fine the “foreign agents” for non-provision of the documents requested by the Ministry of Justice. In addition, the law increased fines for the absence of “foreign agent” labeling on public materials or failure to comply with the approved form of this labeling. The law also introduced liability under Article 19.34 of the CAO for offenses committed by “foreign agents” not only in Russia but also abroad.<sup>10</sup>
- 7** On 25 September 2025, Russian authorities adopted a law allowing security forces to initiate more quickly criminal cases against “foreign agents.” The law allows to initiate criminal cases under the article on non-implementation of the duties of a “foreign agent” (parts 1 and 2 of Article 330.1 of the Criminal Code (CC)) after a person has been brought to administrative responsibility once under the “foreign agent” (article 19.34 of the CAO). Before, such a criminal case could only be initiated if a person had been charged twice within a year. A “foreign agent” can also

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## ii. Application of the legislation on “foreign agents” and its impact on civil society

### **Consequences for legal entities and individuals**

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- 1 Since 2024, the application of “foreign agent” legislation and related administrative and criminal prosecutions has only intensified. In 2025, the Ministry of Justice included 178 individuals and 37 associations in the “foreign agents” registry—215 in total; in 2024, there were 164, representing a one-third increase.<sup>12</sup> Journalists were particularly frequently added: compared to 2024, the number of new entries jumped more than 2.5 times—from 35 to 90. Media and online publications remain the leading category (17 in 2025 and 19 in 2024). For example, independent media outlets DOXA, Avtozak-LIVE, Glasnaya were designated as such in 2025. Cultural figures also accounted for a larger share of new entries (24 in 2025 and 17 in 2024). 173 individuals and associations (80%) were declared “foreign agents” for speaking out against the war in Ukraine, which is more than the total number of new “foreign agents” in 2024.
- 2 The number of cases filed in courts of first instance under Article 19.34 of the Code of Administrative Offences (CAO) (*violation of the procedure for the activities of a “foreign agent”*) amounted to 1,058, which is approximately 30% higher than the number of similar cases filed in courts of first instance in 2024 (750). According to OVD-Info, this article is the second most commonly used among political administrative persecutions in 2025 (in first place is Article 20.3.3 of the CAO (*discrediting the armed forces*), with 1,434 cases).

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- 3** Criminal prosecutions under Article 330.1 of the Criminal Code (CC) (*evasion of duties of a “foreign agent”*) were initiated against 37 people in 2025, while in 2024, against 34. Among them, two prosecutions are against individuals not recognized as “foreign agents,” but are listed as members of organizations designated as “foreign agents.” These are Alexander Voronov, who is being persecuted as one of the participants of the LGBTQ+ initiative group “Coming Out,” and Daria Chernysheva, who is listed in the registry as a member of two “foreign agent” associations at once: the publication “7×7” and “Revolt-Center.”
- 4** A total of 25 sentences were issued under Article 330.1 of the CC in 2025 (the sentences range from a fine of 80,000 rubles to more than 4 years of imprisonment) compared to only one in 2024 (3 years of imprisonment). At least eight of these sentences were issued in cases opened in 2025.
- 5** In 2026, 1,002 cases under Article 19.34 of the CAO were filed in courts of first instance, and two new criminal cases were initiated against “foreign agents” under Article 330.1 of the CC. Courts had sentenced 9 people under Article 330.1 of the CC. in 2026 so far (the sentences range from a fine of 200,000 rubles to more than 3 years of imprisonment).

### **iii. Context of the “foreign agent” legislation within broader repressive measures**

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**1** Examining the use and abuse of “foreign agent” legislation in Russia in isolation, without situating it within the broader context of Russia’s use of repressive legal tools, fails to appreciate the systemic nature of oppression against civil society, human rights defenders and independent media. We refer the CM to Judge Pavli’s concurring opinion in *Novaya Gazeta and Others v Russia* (app. nos 11884/22 and others, 11 February 2025), which observed the need to ‘see the forest for the trees’ when examining Russia’s decline into authoritarianism (paras 6,7, 12):

*[C]an an individual form or instance of interference be deemed to have been “necessary in [an abstract] democratic society” if the general democratic credentials of a particular political system, at a particular moment in time, are in serious doubt? Presumably, it makes little sense, from a prophylactic perspective, to focus on the health of individual trees if a fire is raging in the forest. Worse still, were the Court to adopt such an approach, might it be seen as providing false assurances about the state of the forest as a whole?*

*Returning to the Court’s case-law in respect of Russia over the past two decades, it amounts, on my reading, to a sad chronicle of the incremental but systematic shrinking of democratic spaces in that country. While it has been possible for outsiders to use the Court’s findings in individual cases (among other sources) to piece together a composite picture of the state of Russian democracy—and some have done so—the Court itself has rarely “taken stock” of the situation as a whole.*

...

*[T]his massive legal edifice of “rule by law”—of gradual*

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*It requires a bird's-eye view for which the Court has arguably not equipped itself sufficiently in its working methods and overall approach.*

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**1** We equally see the need for the CM to also take this ‘bird’s-eye view’ of the repressive landscape in Russia. The “foreign agent” legislation must be examined as merely one tool alongside others used to suffocate any organisation or person that poses a threat to the Government or its narratives. Others include:

a. The law on undesirable organisations: at the time of submission, 342 organisations have been declared undesirable, which bans foreign organisations from operating in Russia and criminalises any association with them.

b. The growing use of inclusion in Rosfinmonitoring’s list of “terrorists and extremists,” which does not require conviction under terrorism or extremist offences, but the mere suspicion of a broad range of crimes. Consequences of being on this list include having bank accounts blocked and monthly withdrawals capped at 10,000 rubles.<sup>13</sup> This is only one of a number of lists concerning “terrorists and extremists,” which also include the Federal Security Service’s list of “terrorist organisations” and the Ministry of Justice’s official register of “extremist organisations”; together with the “foreign agent” legislation, inclusion on these lists forms a continuum of pressure on civil society.

c. The increased use of terrorism and extremism prosecution: In 2025, the domestic courts in Russia handed down more than five convictions per day on average under terrorism-related articles.<sup>14</sup> Extremism prosecutions have been used against the last remnants of the supporters of the Navalny organisations,<sup>15</sup> as well as those associated with the vaguely defined ‘International

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- 2 These repressive measures, as well as others, are fully detailed in the joint Rule 9 submitted on the *Kogan and others v. Russia* and *Kutayev v. Russia* group of cases, which will be submitted to the CM at the same time as this submission.

### III. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 We reiterate our conclusions and recommendations set out in 2024 which apply with equal effect in 2026: the Russian Federation has not implemented either individual nor general measures under *Ecodefence and others v. Russia*. Those applicant organisations still listed as “foreign agents” continue to be subject to extensive restrictions and social stigmatisation, which negatively impacts their ability to continue to operate. Liquidated applicant organisations, including due to their “foreign agent” status, continue to be prohibited from conducting their activities. In addition, the law on “foreign agents” continues to expand and the number of “foreign agents” continues to grow, which increases the existing chilling effect and crackdown on civil society.
- 2 As regards individual measures, we recommend the Committee of Ministers indicate to the Russian Government:

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- to pay just satisfaction to all the applicant organisations as specified in the judgment;
  - to revoke the liquidation of the International Memorial and the Memorial Human Rights Centre based on violation of the legislation on “foreign agents” and afford restitution for the negative consequences arising from the liquidation, including the return of property seized by authorities, and to revoke recent negative consequences concerning entities associated with the Memorial organisations, including “foreign agent” and “undesirable organisation” designations;
  - to exclude all the applicant organisations from the registry of “foreign agents” that are still included in it and abolish all fines and other penalties imposed on the applicant organisations in connection with their status, as well as individuals associated with these organisations.
- 1** As regards general measures, we reiterate to the Committee of Ministers to continue regular consideration of this case under the enhanced procedure and to indicate to the Russian Government the necessity to:

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- repeal all laws that constitute the current Russian legislation on “foreign agents”;
- abolish the status of a “foreign agent”;
- refrain from discrimination in law and practice against, *inter alia*, organisations and individuals receiving foreign funds or cooperating with foreign entities;
- reconsider and abolish all decisions on dissolution or other penalties against organisations and individuals adopted under the “foreign agent” legislation;
- eliminate discrimination and repressions via legal tools towards those organisations and individuals that advocate for the protection of civil and political rights or other issues sensitive for the Government.

**1** Finally, we again ask the Committee of Ministers to:

- transfer the information on this case to the UN Human Rights Committee, the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in Russia, the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders, the UN Special Rapporteur on the Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and of Association, and to other relevant UN human rights bodies and to cooperate with them on the execution of this judgment.

30 March 2026

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## **Appendix—Description of the NGOs submitting this application**

**Memorial Human Rights Defence Centre**<sup>17</sup> is a non-governmental organisation founded in June 2022 by supporters of Memorial Human Rights Centre (dissolved

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one of modern Russia’s first human rights NGOs. It worked with grave human rights violations in (post-)conflict areas, civil and political rights and vulnerable groups. It represented hundreds of victims domestically and before the European Court of Human Rights.

**OVD-Info** is an independent human rights media group aimed at monitoring cases of political persecution in Russia and providing legal assistance to victims of such persecution.<sup>18</sup> Today, OVD-Info operates a 24-hour federal hotline and a Telegram bot to collect information on all types of political persecution and coordinate legal assistance to its victims, provides legal education to activists, researches different kinds of political persecution in Russia, conducts advocacy campaigns and strategic litigation. In 2021, OVD-Info was designated as a foreign agent.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://hudoc.exec.coe.int/?i=DH-DD\(2024\)180E](https://hudoc.exec.coe.int/?i=DH-DD(2024)180E)

<sup>2</sup> Information Note on the Court’s case-law 263, URL: <https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng?i=002-13687>

<sup>3</sup> <https://adcmemorial.org/en/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://memopzk.org/en/>

<sup>5</sup> Read more about the case, <https://memorialcenter.org/news/russian-authorities-escalate-pressure-on-sergei-davidis>

<sup>6</sup> “Cutting off the oxygen’: how, against the backdrop of war, the authorities are persecuting ‘foreign agents’—analysis of legislation,” OVD-Info, 29 January 2024, URL: <https://reports.ovd.info/perekryt-kislород-kak-na-fone-voyny-vlasti-presleduyut-inostrannykh-agentov-analiz#1>

<sup>7</sup> “Putin signed a law banning advertising by ‘foreign agents,’” OVD-Info, 28 February 2024, URL: <https://ovd.info/express-news/2024/02/28/putin-podpisal-zakon-o-zaprete-na-razmeshchenie-reklamy-u-inoagentov>

<sup>8</sup> “Putin signed amendments banning ‘foreign agents’ from participating

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<sup>9</sup> “State Duma deputies passed a law banning ‘foreign agents’ from engaging in education,” OVD-Info, 8 April 2025, URL: [https://ovd.info/express-news/2025/04/08/deputaty-gosdumy-prinyali-zakon-zapreshchayuschiy-inoagentam-zanimatsya?utm\\_source=google.com&utm\\_medium=organic&utm\\_term=\(not%20set\)](https://ovd.info/express-news/2025/04/08/deputaty-gosdumy-prinyali-zakon-zapreshchayuschiy-inoagentam-zanimatsya?utm_source=google.com&utm_medium=organic&utm_term=(not%20set))

<sup>10</sup> “Putin approved another bill tightening legislation on ‘foreign agents.’,” OVD-Info, 17 June 2025, URL: [https://ovd.info/express-news/2025/06/17/putin-odobril-ocherednoy-zakonoproekt-uzhestochayuschiy-zakonodatelstvo-ob?utm\\_source=google.com&utm\\_medium=organic&utm\\_term=\(not%20set\)](https://ovd.info/express-news/2025/06/17/putin-odobril-ocherednoy-zakonoproekt-uzhestochayuschiy-zakonodatelstvo-ob?utm_source=google.com&utm_medium=organic&utm_term=(not%20set))

<sup>11</sup> “The State Duma adopted amendments allowing for faster initiation of criminal cases against ‘foreign agents.’,” OVD-Info, 25 September 2025, URL: [https://ovd.info/express-news/2025/09/25/gosduma-prinyala-popravki-pozvolyayuschie-bystree-vozbuzhdat-ugolovnye-dela?utm\\_source=google.com&utm\\_medium=organic&utm\\_term=\(not%20set\)](https://ovd.info/express-news/2025/09/25/gosduma-prinyala-popravki-pozvolyayuschie-bystree-vozbuzhdat-ugolovnye-dela?utm_source=google.com&utm_medium=organic&utm_term=(not%20set))

<sup>12</sup> For more information on this section, see OVD-Info’s report of 2025, URL: <https://reports.ovd.info/repressii-v-rossii-v-2025-godu-obzor-ovd-info>

<sup>13</sup> “Russia’s ‘terrorists and extremists’ list is now sweeping up journalists and academics. Soon, Navalny donors could face life in prison” Meduza, 23 October 2025, URL: <https://meduza.io/en/cards/russia-s-terrorists-and-extremists-list-is-now-sweeping-up-journalists-and-academics-soon-navalny-donors-could-face-life-in-prison>

<sup>14</sup> “Five Sentences Every Day: New Data on Terrorism-Related Trials in Russia,” First Department, 13 October 2025, URL: <https://dept.one/story/terrorizm-2025/>

<sup>15</sup> See “Anti-extremism in 2024: Regulation of public speech and organized activity,” SOVA Research Centre, 14 July 2025, URL: [https://www.sova-center.ru/racism-xenophobia/publications/2025/07/d51902/#\\_Toc203218350](https://www.sova-center.ru/racism-xenophobia/publications/2025/07/d51902/#_Toc203218350)

<sup>16</sup> “Russia: Rising Toll of LGBT ‘Extremism’ Designation,” Human Rights Watch, 30 June 2025, URL: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2025/06/30/russia-rising-toll-of-lgbt-extremism-designation>

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