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By: Ruxandra Adam, News Editor



Russian Authorities Suspend NGO's Activities

Due to new bureaucratic obstacles

In spite of numerous objections issued by the United States, which urged Russia to speed up re-registration procedures of NGOs and allow them to continue working on Wednesday, Russian authorities announced on Thursday that they had to suspend the activities of no less than 100 foreign non-governmental organizations, including those that monitor the implementation of the human rights laws, due to the fact that all of them did not meet a new re-registration deadline stipulated by a harsh new law in this domain, CNN reports. Among the groups that needed to stop their work were Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, which coincidentally or not, had been avid critics of Russian President Vladimir Putin's administration. Both organizations, as well as others, accused Russian officials of submitting them to unnecessary legal obstacles. For example, the deputy chief of the American Human Rights Watch branch in Moscow, Alexander Petrov, stressed upon the fact that the organization had to stop all its operations, including the research-based and interviewing rights victims ones plus attendance of public events, on Thursday, according to the new law. He expressed his hopes with regard to the resumption of activities as soon as possible, yet he admitted that the institute was being challenged by a new deadline at the end of this month, when it would have to present its plans and objectives for the next year. In an interview with the Associated Press, a lawyer that offers legal advice to foreign NGOs, Kim Reed, accused the Federal Registration Service of deliberately creating all sorts of delays in legal proceedings, by demanding documents of minor importance that the offices of such non-profit organizations had to devise in a short amount of time. "It appears that if you are an organization involved in human rights or democracy activities then your application gets much harsher scrutiny. Even if you are not sending police and court bailiffs to shut down their office, by not registering them, you are effectively doing that", Reed stated, quoted by the CNN.