

118TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. R. 3979

To provide for the designation of the Russian Federation as a state sponsor of terrorism.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JUNE 9, 2023

Mr. LIEU (for himself, Mr. COHEN, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Mr. GOLDEN of Maine, Mr. BUCK, and Mrs. CHERFILUS-McCORMICK) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

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## A BILL

To provide for the designation of the Russian Federation as a state sponsor of terrorism.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Russia is a State Spon-  
5 sor of Terrorism Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

8 (1) Pursuant to existing law, it is United States  
9 policy to designate countries that have repeatedly

1 provided support for acts of international terrorism  
2 as state sponsors of terrorism.

3 (2) Cuba, the Democratic People's Republic of  
4 North Korea, Iran, and Syria are designated as  
5 state sponsors of terrorism.

6 (3) At the direction of President Vladimir  
7 Putin, the Government of the Russian Federation  
8 has and continues to promote acts of international  
9 terrorism against political opponents and nation  
10 states.

11 (4) Under the orders of President Putin, the  
12 Government of the Russian Federation engaged in a  
13 campaign of terror, utilizing brutal force targeting  
14 civilians during the Second Chechen War.

15 (5) Actions by the Government of the Russian  
16 Federation against civilian centers, such as Grozny,  
17 the capital of Chechnya, left countless innocent men,  
18 women, and children dead or wounded.

19 (6) Since 2014, the Government of the Russian  
20 Federation has supported separatists engaging in  
21 acts of violence against Ukrainian civilians in the  
22 Donbas region.

23 (7) The Government of the Russian Federation  
24 provides material support to Syria, a nation cur-

1       rently designated as a state sponsor of terrorism,  
2       that has been used to target the Syrian people.

3           (8) According to the Congressional Research  
4       Service, the Russian Federation uses private military  
5       networks of mercenaries, such as the Wagner Group,  
6       which collaborates with the Ministry of Defense of  
7       the Russian Federation, to support the foreign pol-  
8       icy objectives of the Russian Federation. These pri-  
9       vate mercenary networks supported by the Russian  
10      Federation have spread terror in various parts of the  
11      world.

12          (9) The Department of the Treasury identifies  
13      the Wagner Group as “a designated Russian Min-  
14      istry of Defense proxy force” and states that “Wag-  
15      ner’s activities in other countries, including Ukraine,  
16      Syria, Sudan, and Libya, have generated insecurity  
17      and incited violence against innocent civilians”.

18          (10) It was reported in February 2022 that  
19      more than 400 Russian mercenaries from the Wag-  
20      ner Group were dispatched to Kyiv with orders from  
21      the Kremlin to assassinate President Volodymyr  
22      Zelensky and members of the Government of  
23      Ukraine.

24          (11) On March 1, 2022, Jason Blazakis, the di-  
25      rector of the Department of State’s Counterter-

1       rorism Finance and Designations Office in the Bu-  
2       reau of Counterterrorism from 2008 to 2018, wrote  
3       in reference to white supremacist groups that “Rus-  
4       sia provides sanctuary to a U.S.-designated terrorist  
5       group, the Russian Imperial Movement, which oper-  
6       ates with impunity in Russian territory.”.

7               (12) On March 17, 2022, President Volodymyr  
8       Zelensky called for the world to acknowledge the  
9       Russian Federation as a terrorist state.

10              (13) The Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine has ap-  
11       pealed to Congress to encourage the Department of  
12       State to recognize the Russian Federation as a state  
13       sponsor of terrorism noting that “the Russian Fed-  
14       eration has for years supported and financed ter-  
15       rorist regimes and terrorist organizations, including  
16       being the main supplier of weapons to the Assad re-  
17       gime in Syria and supporting terrorists in the Mid-  
18       dle East and Latin America, organizing acts of  
19       international terrorism, including the poisoning of  
20       the Skripal family in the United Kingdom of Great  
21       Britain and Northern Ireland, the downing of a civil-  
22       ian Malaysian airliner and other acts of terrorism”.

23              (14) On November 23, 2022, the European  
24       Parliament recognized Russia as a state sponsor of  
25       terrorism.

1           (15) On November 23, 2022, the European  
2 Parliament recognized the Russian Federation as a  
3 state sponsor of terrorism.

4           (16) On January 26, 2023, the Department of  
5 the Treasury designated the Wagner Group as a  
6 Transnational Criminal Organization, citing that  
7 “Wagner personnel have engaged in an ongoing pat-  
8 tern of serious criminal activity, including mass exe-  
9 cutions, rape, child abductions, and physical abuse  
10 in the Central African Republic (CAR) and Mali”.

11           (17) As of January 26, 2023, the Wagner  
12 Group has also been sanctioned by Australia, Can-  
13 ada, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the European  
14 Union.

15           (18) On February 25, 2023, the European  
16 Union implemented Council Regulation 2023/430,  
17 which sanctioned eight people and seven entities for  
18 serious human rights abuses linked to the Wagner  
19 Group in the Central African Republic and Sudan.

20           (19) On February 27, 2023, United Nations  
21 Secretary-General António Guterres called Russia’s  
22 actions in Ukraine “the most massive violations of  
23 human rights” in the world today in a speech to the  
24 Human Rights Council in Geneva.

1           (20) The United States has a range of tools  
2           available to hold the Russian Federation account-  
3           able, reduce its war machine, and isolate it economi-  
4           cally and diplomatically, including by designating it  
5           as a state sponsor of terrorism and imposing cor-  
6           responding sanctions.

7   **SEC. 3. DESIGNATION OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION AS A**  
8                                   **STATE SPONSOR OF TERRORISM.**

9           (a) IN GENERAL.—Effective beginning on the date  
10          of the enactment of this Act, the Russian Federation shall  
11          be deemed to have been determined to be a country the  
12          government of which has repeatedly provided support for  
13          acts of international terrorism for purposes of—

14                 (1) section 1754(c)(1)(A) of the Export Control  
15          Reform Act of 2018 (50 U.S.C. 4813(c)(1)(A));

16                 (2) section 620A of the Foreign Assistance Act  
17          of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2371);

18                 (3) section 40 of the Arms Export Control Act  
19          (22 U.S.C. 2780); or

20                 (4) any other provision of law.

21          (b) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this Act  
22          may be construed as to provide for the imposition of sanc-  
23          tions against any person that engages in transactions to

- 1 export agricultural products from Ukraine or to provide
- 2 humanitarian assistance in Ukraine.

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