

Dozhd TV Forced to Look for New Premises

By [Christopher Brennan](#)

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The landlord for independent television station Dozhd has added to the channel's woes by refusing to extend the lease for its office in central Moscow.

On Thursday, Dozhd reported that its landlord Myasnitskaya 35 sent a letter saying it would not renew the sides' current agreement for the channel's space at the former factory complex Krasny Oktyabr, which will end on June 20.

Dozhd investor Alexander Vinokurov wrote on his blog that the station knew that plans to reconstruct the complex would necessitate finding a new office, but said that a move had been planned between 2016 and 2018 because it had been told the project would not begin for three to five years.

The Krasny Oktyabr project page on the website of reconstruction developer Guta Development said that the company will not finish finalizing its plans for the area until

the end of this year.

Vinokurov said that he had told a Gazeta.ru journalist not to believe an unidentified individual who said that tabloid news website LifeNews would replace Dozhd in its office, though in his blog post after receiving the letter he wrote "I was not completely right."

Dozhd came under fire from conservative lawmakers earlier this year after briefly publishing a poll asking whether Leningrad should have been surrendered to Nazi forces to avoid hundreds of thousands of deaths during World War II. The incident caused the country's major cable providers to drop the channel, known for its independent coverage of Russian politics, and observers have speculated that the providers quick actions may have been part of a coordinated Kremlin crackdown on the media.

The channel's general director Natalya Sindeyeva said in earlier March that without its television advertising revenue, Dozhd could survive for one or two months, though in a recent interview with Sostav.ru she said that the channel plans to continue through the Internet, Smart TV and fundraising campaigns.

The first several months of 2014 have seen increased political pressure on media outlets. Last week Lenta.ru editor-in-chief Galina Timchenko was replaced by a pro-Kremlin journalist after the site published an interview with a Ukrainian nationalist.

Contact the author at c.brennan@imedia.ru

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